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THE

CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES;

OR,

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST,

AND THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST MILITANT HERE ON EARTH.

BY

THE REV. HUGH M'NEILE, M.A.

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"Scripturarum ignorantia omnis mali fons et origo est: nobis enim salus Christus est; salutis via Fides; viæ dux Scriptura."

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PREFACE.

PAINFUL as the necessity is, it seems now to be impossible to deny that the necessity exists for christian controversy. If miracles may not be expected, and if therefore means must be used for the preservation of christian truth in the world, it is plain that the prolific ingenuity of the advocates of error must be patiently and perseveringly resisted.

There is nothing new in this state of things except in degree. Since the beginning of the world controversy has been an inevitable condition of the preservation of truth. The sacred writings are eminently controversial.

The prophets of Baal who patronised idolatry, and the false prophets of Israel who said, "peace, peace, when there was no true peace, daubing the wall with untempered mortar," compelled the faithful witnesses for Jehovah to engage in controversy.

A similar necessity was laid upon the great Prophet, "the faithful and true witness," by the Sad-

ducees who denied the resurrection, and the Pharisees who "made void the commandments of God, through their traditions."

And in like manner the Apostles were compelled to become controversialists, by the various false teachers, who, even then, intruded into, disturbed, and divided the infant christian churches. "The noble army of martyrs," both primitive and protestant, were controversialists.

We must not complain of the inheritance of our fathers, and, judging by their experience, we have no reason to fear for the great cause of "our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ." For ourselves, it is of primary importance that we should defend what we believe to be his truth, with "meekness of wisdom;" and not defend only, but *restate* that truth also, with all plainness of speech; remembering that christian knowledge is not hereditary, and that the real source of danger from the heresy of the few, is to be found in the ignorance of the many.

The writer of the following pages has addressed himself to direct *teaching*, rather than direct controversy; and his standard of ultimate reference for all his teaching, has been the holy Scripture. With a cordiality which words can but inadequately express, he agrees in the statement that, "what we find there (in holy Scripture) is a part of Christianity, whether recognised as such or no, in after ages: what we do not find there is no part of Christianity, however early, or however general may have been the attempts to

interpolate it. If this be not so, we must change our religion and our master; we can be no longer Christians, servants of Christ, instructed by him and his own Apostles; but Alexandrianists, Syrianists, Asianists, following the notions which happened to prevail in the church, according to the preponderance of particular local or temporary influences, and following as our master neither the wisdom of God, nor even the wisdom of men; but the opinions of a time and state of society, whose inferiority in all other respects is acknowledged."*

To a mind duly sensible of its own infirmity in grappling with questions of abstract truth or falsehood, and a conscience awake to the solemn responsibility of influencing other minds: every fresh reflection tends to enhance the value and the mercy to us, of God's written word.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for us to form strictly accurate judgments of our fellow-men; to examine fully, fairly, and impartially, the operations of mind, the workings of affection, the conflicts of passion, the calculations of interest which compose the complicated machinery of a human character; to trace with nice discrimination the boundary lines between the sincerity which deceives self, and the hypocrisy which deceives or aims at deceiving others.

Our difficulties in so doing arise from various causes.

* *Arnold's Fragment on the Church*, p. 47.

First, these elements of character are evanescent. They fluctuate. They do not, like masses of matter, present always the same aspect to the inquirer. Rather they resemble the clouds, ever changing their forms before the wind, and their colours in the rays of the passing sun.

Moreover, secondly, they are deceitful, frequently presenting appearances which are not real, like the clouds again, exhibiting fantastic shapes of mountains, castles, battlements, or even of living beings. Neither are our difficulties confined to those causes only which belong to the things to be examined.

They arise, thirdly, from the state of the examiners. We also ourselves are fluctuating and deceitful. If Adam, in all the perfections of his unfallen nature, and unclouded understanding, had been brought to the investigation of such a creature as one of his fallen descendants; doubtless his glance would have been penetrating, and his knowledge derived therefrom extensive and accurate. The glass would have been steady in the hand of the inquirer, and whatever inaccuracy might have arisen in the process would have been occasioned exclusively by the movement in the object of his inquiry. But in all our inquiries the case is different. We are ourselves involved in the movement. The hand which holds the glass is unsteady, as well as the object to which the glass is directed. The subject to be investigated is dark, and the investigator is a partaker of that darkness. The human character is deceitful, and the

human student of character also is deceitful. Man as the subject of an experiment is morally blind, and man as the acting experimenter is morally blind. And if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.

Such, in brief and in truth, is the history and character of all human philosophy of the human mind, unassisted by the enlightening teaching of the Spirit of God. Such indeed is the undesigned confession of philosophy. The celebrated saying of one of the celebrated sages of Greece was, *know thyself.* He was wise enough to find out that he did not know himself; and he holds up self-knowledge as the climax of wisdom attained by none, to be desired and aimed at by all. No man knows himself: and how then with fewer opportunities for examination, can he know others, who, in all the essentials of their nature, are like himself?

Here, in the impotence of man, to detect himself, or investigate his fellow, we discover another reason for devout thankfulness to our God for the inestimable treasure of holy Scripture, the living and lively oracles of truth. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. iv. 12. Jesus Christ is the word of God. In him is more than the created wisdom of Adam in its best estate. He is "the wisdom of God." Of him it is

truly written that, "*he knew what was in man.*" He sounded all the depths of man's mind. He penetrated the most secret recesses. He detected the most deceitful appearances. He arrested the most fitful and evanescent operations. He fixed, embodied, condensed, so as to exhibit to our view, and hold fast for our investigation, the cameleon character of man.

Refraining then from the mazes of abstract theological metaphysics, in which it is easy to be elaborately useless, and learnedly lost; I have endeavoured in all simplicity to use the word of God as "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," (Ps. cxix. 105,) while engaged for my own satisfaction,—and that, I trust, of my readers also,—in an investigation of the truth concerning *the church of God in Christ, and the churches of Christ militant here on earth.*

On the subject of what is called "the notes of the church," I have been much struck with the justice and force of some observations in an anonymous discourse, attributed to Dr. Sherlock, in refutation of Cardinal Bellarmin's celebrated Treatise. The writer urges the important distinction between the inquiry, "What is a true church?" and the inquiry, "*Which* is *the* true church?" He describes the right use of "notes" to be, to ascertain what it is which makes a church a true church; which he affirms to be necessary for all Christians to know, that they may take care that nothing be wanting in their communion, which is essential to a true church. And

he charges the Cardinal with having introduced and discussed quite a different question, viz. how, among all the divisions of Christendom, we may find out that only true church which is the mistress of all other churches, the only infallible guide in matters of faith, and to which alone the promises of pardon and salvation are made; and by some notes and characters of such a church, to prove that the church of Rome is that church.

He says, "Let us now consider the cardinal's way by some certain marks and notes, to find out which is the true church before we know what a true church is. To pick out of all the churches in the world, one church which we must own for the only true church, and reject all other churches which do not subject themselves to this one church. To find out such a church on whose authority we must rely for the whole christian faith, and in whose communion only, pardon of sin is to be had. That is the use of notes in the church of Rome, as I have already shown you; and truly they are very pretty things to be proved by notes, as to consider them particularly."

"To find out which is the true church before we know what a true church is. This, methinks, is not a natural way for inquiry, but is like seeking for we know not what. There are two inquiries in order of nature prior to, *which* is the true church? viz. whether there be a true church or not, and what it is? The first of these the cardinal takes for granted,

that there is a church; but I won't take it for granted, but desire these note-makers to give me some notes to prove that there is a church. There is indeed a great deal of talk and noise in the world about a church; but that is no proof that there is a church; and yet it is not a self-evident proposition that there is a church; and therefore it must be proved. Now that there is a church must be proved by notes, as well as which is this true church, or else the whole design of notes is lost; and I would gladly see these notes, which prove that there is a church before we know what a church is. To understand the mystery of this we must briefly consider the reason and use of notes in the church of Rome. According to the popish resolution of faith into the authority of the church, the first thing we must know is, which is the true church, for we must receive the scriptures and the interpretation of them, and the whole christian faith and worship from the church, and therefore can know nothing of religion until we have found the church. The use then of notes is to find out the church before and without the scriptures, for if they admit of a scripture proof, they must allow that we can know and understand the scriptures without the authority or interpretation of the church, which undermines the very foundation of popery. Now, I first desire to know how they will prove that there is a church without the scripture? that you will say is visible itself, for we see a christian church in the world: but what is it I see? I see a company of

men who call themselves a church, and this is all I can see; and is this seeing a church? A church must have a divine original and institution; and therefore there is no seeing a church without seeing its charter, for there can be no other note or mark of the being of a church but the institution of it."

"And this proves that we cannot know that there is a church without knowing in some measure what this church is; for the charter which founds the church must declare the nature and constitution of it, what its faith, and worship, and laws, and privileges, are. But now these essential characters of a church must not be reckoned by the Romanists among the notes of a church; for then we must find out the true church by the true faith and true worship (not the true faith by the true church) which destroys popery."

"Hence it is that these note-makers never attempt to give us any notes whereby we shall know that there is a church, or what this church is; for there are no notes of these, but such as they dare not give, viz.,—The authority of the scriptures, and every man's private judgment of the sense and interpretation of them; for at least till we have found a church we must judge for ourselves; and then the authority of the church comes too late; for we must first judge upon the whole of religion if we must find out a true church by the true faith before

we can know the true church; and we cannot rely on her authority before we know her; and therefore they take it for granted that there is a church, which they can never prove in their way, and attempt to give some notes whereby to know which is the church; and then learn what the church is from the church herself, which is like giving marks whereby to know an unicorn, before I know whether there be an unicorn or not, or what it is."

"Another blunder in this dispute about notes, is, that they give us notes whereby to find out the true catholic church, before we know what a particular church is. For all Bellarmin's notes are intended only for the catholic church; and therefore his first note is the name catholic. Whereas the catholic church is nothing else but *all true christian* churches in the world, united together by one common faith, and such acts of communion as distinct churches are capable of, and obliged to. Every particular church, possessing the true faith of Christ, is a true christian church; and the catholic church is all the true christian churches in the world, which have all the same nature, and are, in some sense, of the same communion. So that it is impossible to know what the catholic church is before we know what a particular church is; as it is, to know what the sea is, before we know what water is. Every true single particular church has the whole and entire nature of a church, and would be a true

church, though there were no other church in the world; as the christian church at Jerusalem was, before any other christian churches were planted: and therefore there can be no other notes of a true church but what belongs to every true particular church; and that can be nothing but what is essential to a church, and what all true christian churches in the world agree in, viz., the true faith and worship of Christ."

In answer to the cardinal's argument, that we cannot know what true scripture is, nor what is the true interpretation of scripture, but from the church; and that, therefore, we must know the church before we can know the true faith; the writer replies,

"I readily grant that at this distance from the writing the books of the New Testament, there is no way to assure us that they were written by the Apostles, or apostolical men, and owned for inspired writings; but the testimony of Christians in all ages. But herein we do not consider them *as a church*, but *as credible witnesses*. Whether there be any such thing as a church, or not, we can know only by the Scriptures. But without knowing whether there be a church or not, if we know that for so many hundred years these books have been owned to be written by such men, and have been received from the Apostles' days till now, by all who call themselves Christians; this is as good an historical proof as we can have for anything. And it is the

authority of an uninterrupted tradition, not the authority of the church, considered as a church, which moves us to believe them. For, setting aside the authority of tradition, how can the authority of a company of men, who call themselves the church, before I know whether there be any church, move me to believe anything which was done sixteen hundred years ago?"

"But there is a company of men in the world, and have been successively for sixteen hundred years, (whether they be a church or not is nothing to this question,) who assure me that these books which we call the Scriptures were written by inspired men, and contain a faithful account of what Christ did, and taught, and suffered; and therefore I believe such books: and from them I learn what that true faith is, which makes a true christian church."

"As for the true interpretation of scripture, that we cannot understand what it is without the church, this I deny. The scriptures are very intelligible to honest and diligent readers, in all things necessary to salvation; and if they be not, I desire to know how we shall find out the church. For certainly the church has no charter, but what is in the scripture; and then if we must believe the church before we can believe or understand the scriptures, we must believe the church before we can possibly know whether there be a church or not. The scripture cannot be known without the church, nor

the church without the scripture, and yet one of them must be known first! and yet neither of them can be known first, according to these principles, which is such an absurdity, as all the art of the world can never palliate."

The distinction here marked between men considered as credible witnesses to facts, and men considered as a church, is of vital importance. To constitute men competent and credible witnesses to facts occurring in their own times, no divine constitution is necessary, no mission, no revelation, nothing but the ordinary functions of sense and reason which men possess as men. But to constitute them a church, (especially such a church as is supposed invested with such authority as is claimed,) a divine constitution is indispensable, and a very special mission.

These questions then arise. Where is this divine constitution described? By whom was this special mission given? Who formed men into a church?

To say that our Lord Jesus Christ did it, to appeal to the scriptures in support of this fact, and to believe the authenticity, genuineness, and inspiration of the scriptures on the authority of intelligent witnesses considered *as men*—all this is simple, and clear, and satisfactory. But to appeal to the church *as a church*, for a primary proof that there exists such a thing as a church, is wilfully to confound the distinction between men as men, (possess-

ing sense, and reason, and memory, existing as we see and know without any proof that men do exist,) and men as a corporation, invested with authority by a divine institution, and so existing in a way for which we demand proof. It is through inattention to this distinction that the sophism of the Romanists seems to be an argument.

The use made of the "notes of the church" in the following pages, is to show that in their true and full meaning they belong to "the church of God in Christ," and to nothing else. To any of the churches of Christ militant here on earth, they cannot be applied with truth, except in a very qualified sense.

The distinction here made between the church and the churches introduces the outward and visible *ordinances* of Christianity.

To a christian discussion of this branch of the subject, careful discrimination, and charitable forbearance are indispensable; discrimination to distinguish between what is of divine institution, and what of human addition; and forbearance to deal moderately with what man has added, as with what man may omit, or alter, "so that nothing be ordained against God's word."

The institutions themselves, in all that is *indeed divine*, are the common characteristic of "the church of God in Christ:" the human additions, in all that it is lawful for man to add, are the varying badges

of " the churches of Christ militant here on earth ;" while to ordain unlawful additions, i. e. such as are against God's word, and to insist on their observance as indispensable to salvation, is one of the predicted marks of the great " apostasy" from the church.

Touching the nature and efficacy of the ordinances, no extreme views are advocated in the following pages. The writer cannot rely on the Christian sacraments as physical miracles of never-failing efficacy. He can find no divine promise to them, to justify such reliance ; and no human assertions, or assurances, or anathemas,* however confidently advanced, or vehemently reiterated, can in his judgment supply the needful proof.

Neither can he, on the other side, be content to think or *feel* concerning the christian sacraments as if they were, and could be, nothing more than emblems of spiritual truth, and badges of a christian man's profession. Still less can he coincide in the opinion that they were temporary semi-Jewish institutions, intended for the infancy of the christian church, till her true spirituality was understood and established ; but not now binding upon the practice of Christian men.

Rather he desires to express his convictions in

* " Si quis dixerit, sacramenta novæ legis non *continere* gratiam quam significant . . . . . si quis dixerit, per ipsa novæ legis sacramenta ex opere operato non *conferri* gratiam . . . . . anathema sit." — *Conc. Trid.* Sess. vii. c. 6, 8.

the following words of Hooker, where all these points are comprehensively touched. "The sacraments contain in themselves no vital efficacy; they are not physical, but moral instruments of salvation; duties of service and worship, which, unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. They are moral instruments, the use whereof is in our hands, the effect in his: for the use, we have his express commandment; for the effect, his conditional promise."* In happy accordance with this, the twenty-fifth Article of our own church declares, that "in such only as *worthily receive* the sacraments, they have a wholesome effect or operation:" and the twenty-ninth contains a significant description of those who do not receive worthily, and in whom, consequently, the sacraments have no wholesome effect or operation, viz., "such as be void of a lively faith."

In no society upon earth do the marks of "the church of God in Christ" appear more conspicuously —or, as the writer thinks, so conspicuously—as in the Church of England; judged by her constitution and authorised standards. He is grieved to be obliged, by the force of facts, to feel; but feeling it, he cannot withhold the faithful avowal; that, judged by her present practice, she is not entitled to such commendation.

Yes, though our adversaries should mock at our

* Ecc. Pol. vi. 5.

complaints; though they should misrepresent as essential and inseparable parts of our system, what we deprecate as departures from, and abuses of, that system; and though they should ascribe to unworthy motives, our continued attachment to our church, notwithstanding the evils so exposed and deplored; still our duty is clear; our attachment is sincere and unaltered; though this we freely confess, that to render that attachment abidingly conscientious in existing circumstances, it must be continued under protest against the abuses.

Instead of being a fair counterpart of her standards, the present practice of the church of England, viewed in her authoritative administration, is in many respects a deplorable contrast. Apostolical doctrine, in all the free grace and unsearchable riches of Christ, is plainly maintained in her standards; and as plainly discountenanced by her Rulers—with some exceptions. Apostolical fervour, in earnest prayer for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, breathes through her Liturgy; but is condemned as unhallowed enthusiasm, when expressed in any other than the very terms which have become familiar to the ear, while the life and power of their true meaning is far from the heart. Her prayers are consecrated by prescription and use, and are very highly commended; provided they are read without any really serious intention of being heard and answered: but such of her warm-hearted sons as really believe what she has taught them to

say; and give thanks in good earnest to their heavenly Father, because He has been graciously pleased to hear them, and "grant them in this world knowledge of his truth;" are frowned upon by the governing party as vastly too energetic.

In her standards, there is a faithful echo to the scriptural truth, that "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good cause," and an earnest invitation to follow the example of Him who said, "the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up;" but in her administration, there is an unfeigned and scarcely concealed horror of zeal, as of a most unorthodox and ungentlemanlike quality, altogether unsuited to sober-minded and harmless churchmen.

In her standards, the Church of England is Protestant—emphatically Protestant;* but in her present administration—thank God not universally, but—in a very influential section of her governing body, she is, to say the least, doubtful; softly expressing one opinion, and with infatuated inconsistency acting upon another; gently reproving Tractarianism, and substantially promoting Tractarians. The good sense of the country is shocked

* Even this is denied by some of her "non-natural" sons; but how can it be disproved in the face of this one fact, to mention no other, that the Church of England, in her declaration after her communion service, condemns the distinguishing and most solemn act of the worship of the Roman Church—to wit, the adoration of the Host—as "Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians?"

by such proceedings, and whether our rulers will believe the painful fact or not; it is a fact, that the attachment of the lay-members of the church, in unnumbered multitudes throughout the kingdom, is becoming seriously relaxed; and in those immediate localities where Tractarianism is encouraged by authority—in act, though not in word—dissenters from the national church are in rapid multiplication. Thus while some of the Tractarians have themselves dissented into Romanism; the others, who remain and find favour in the eyes of our rulers, are hurrying the christian laity into congregational independency.

The writer is quite aware that the persons who ought most deeply and practically to feel such a statement as this, are precisely the persons most likely to turn away from it as from the disagreeable voice of a needless alarmist. Yet it might be supposed, that sufficiently emphatic proofs have been supplied to them, on many topics, that the country will not rest quiet because they wish it to do so, and that danger cannot be averted by closing our eyes to the fact of its existence.

Neither is existing danger all of one kind. While a two-fold defection is weakening the church from within, our danger from without is imminent; exposed as we are to the systematic, patient, and skilfully conducted advances of Romanism. Our Romanist opponents are not merely that portion of our own population who are members of the Church of

Rome—if this were so, the danger would be comparatively small—but the whole organised system of that church, throughout the whole world, is against us.

Universal supremacy is the claim of that system —a claim not admitting of abandonment, or even of modification. It is declared to be divine in its origin, and absolute in itself. To say that the subjects of the Papal Court aim at the establishment of such a supremacy, is only to say that they are sincere and consistent. To say that they make use of all practicable means for the attainment of their object is only to say that they are active and diligent. To say that they vary the means made use of, as the circumstances vary under which they are called to act, is only to say that they are sagacious and skilful. And to say that they act often as if they thought the end justified the means—denying or asserting, and that on oath, as seems most expedient at the time—is only to say that they treat some of their own principles practically. To allege, therefore, that they aim at the destruction of the British constitution in church and state, and the subjugation of England to the papal crown; is not to accuse them of any dereliction of duty. On the contrary, holding the principles which they hold, it would be a great dereliction of duty, on their part, not to attempt this consummation; which, in prostrating England, would prostrate the whole world at the feet of St. Peter's chair. All our colo-

nies, east and west, would, as a matter of course, fall in the wake of the mother country. The Protestant communities on the continent of Europe would prove a still easier conquest; and no steady or combined resistance could be expected from the insulated and unorganised congregations of the Protestants in America. There would not remain on the face of the globe a single citadel unstormed; not a voice of even remonstrance against the imprisonment, torture, or martyrdom of the last of the heretics. Illustrations of this abound. Madeira, Sardinia, Ancona, Ireland, supply living proofs that Romanism now, as in the days of Hildebrand, claims the world as her own; and would make, if practicable, an unrelenting clearance of all obstinate nonconformists from the face of the earth. They are bound to make the attempt; they are bound to persevere in the attempt; however, circumstances may, from time to time, lead them to restrain or modify their successive demands in this country. Whether it be the elective franchise in 1793; the establishment of Maynooth College in 1795; admission to the Imperial Parliament, and other offices of trust and power in 1829; to the Municipal Corporations in 1834; whether it be the state endowment of Maynooth in 1845; the Repeal of the Irish Union in 1847; or the formal national establishment of the Roman church in Ireland in 1850;—all have been, and would be only instalments; instalments, at no one stage supplying a

level on which contentment and peace might be expected; but in every instance serving as the steps of a ladder for gradual ascent, increasing the possibility, and therefore animating the prospect, and stimulating the ambition to reach the top.

Were England's church true to herself, Rome's ambition could never be gratified. Present appearances, however, are mournfully against us. Warning after warning has been disregarded. Even the declension of above half a hundred of our clergy, and I know not how many laity, through the "facilis descensus" of Tractarianism, down to the "lower deep" of prostrate and unquestioning superstition; does not appear to have produced the smallest practical alarm in our rulers. There is nothing new under the sun. In vain Cassandra raised her voice. In vain Laocoon hurled his spear. In vain the clang of hostile armour sounded from the bowels of treachery. Troy's temper was infatuation, and the natural consequence was Troy's ruin.

Engaged, as the writer is, in the incessant activities, public and private, of the ministry of the Gospel, in the midst of a poor and densely-crowded population; preaching, at the least, three times every week, and never without thoughtful and earnest preparation; liable to interruption at every hour of the day and night; and having access to books on but a limited scale: he feels deeply his inability to do justice—not to his subject, no uninspired man can

do it justice, but—to his own feelings and convictions.

He does not say this to deprecate criticism, but for the sake of the good cause which he so unworthily—and at such manifold disadvantages, when compared with its assailants—defends: since there is scarcely a position taken in this book, which, on a re-perusal, he does not feel that he could and would have made stronger, but for the interruptions referred to.

With regard to criticism: considered in a *literary* point of view, he is comparatively little concerned about it; but he hopes, in all sincerity of meekness and teachableness, to profit by any serious and sound *theological* criticism which his publication may elicit.

He loves the Church of England cordially, while neither ignorant, nor heedless of the painful practical abuses, which so sadly interfere with her full efficiency. He has served in her ministry with "a ready mind" for six-and-twenty years. His soul reposes on the fundamental truth so plainly and pointedly expressed in her Articles. His heart's best desires are fervently uttered in her Liturgy. His most matured convictions are in accordance with her order and government. He is fully satisfied that she supplies abundant scope and opportunity for every exercise of devotion, and for every act of self-denial and benevolence, which go to constitute the whole "reasonable service" to which

Christians are called in this world. And he will esteem himself richly rewarded for his labours, if they tend, in some measure, to settle the now agitated minds, to fix the wavering affections, and to stimulate the active services—in church teaching and church extension—of his fellow-churchmen.

St. Jude's, Liverpool, March 1846.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

Happiness in man—The character of God—The Gospel of Christ—Interesting to angels—Entrusted to men specially commissioned for its proclamation and extension.

1. HAPPINESS! True and abiding happiness for man, where and how is this to be found? "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him!"* We are all expectants. Each of us has something in progress or in prospect upon which we are waiting, and from which we are in expectation of some advantage, or enjoyment, or both. We may have been disappointed in such expectations often; still, new objects suggest themselves. The world is fertile in them. Before one project comes to a termination another has started, and the interest excited by it has engaged the mind. Thus man is beguiled from one expectation to

* Ps. lxii. 5.

another, till the thread of life is suddenly snapped, and all his hopes perish. There is no hope in hell. If hope were there, hell would be no longer hell. But hope descends to his children upon earth, and they follow in the footsteps of their father. Their father's hopes have indeed perished; but he does not come back to tell of the disappointment. Stone after stone falls in the water, one with a louder noise and making a somewhat greater commotion than another, but the difference is momentary—the water closes over both; each is followed by another and another; and the water closes over all. The mean man and the mighty man, where are they? The learned man and the ignorant man, the rich man and the poor man, the party man, and the moderate man, and the neutral man, where are they? Ah, Lord God! thou hast taught us that "wide is the gate and broad is the road that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go therein;" therefore "hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it." *

There is a straight gate, a narrow way, a way of escape from the common ruin. That which we have heard of the saving truth of God, that which we have seen with our eyes in the Holy Scriptures, which our understandings have perceived and our affections embraced of the power of divine grace;

* St. Matt. vii. 13. Isa. v. 14.

that which we have thus known and felt declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us; and truly "our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." In the enjoyment of this fellowship happiness is found. Here man's expectation is indeed from God. This supplies an object of attraction to the soul, which, though it hinders not the man from attending to other things, does hinder him from adhering to other things. It does not take him out of the world, but it raises him above the world; it does not become exclusive, but it does become paramount.

Towards this fellowship with God some degree of right and true knowledge of God is indispensable. But no man has any real true knowledge of God except he has received it from God himself. Flesh and blood cannot by searching find out God. Except God himself tell of himself, no man can know him. To guess at him by inferences from his works; or, as St. Paul expresses it, "to feel after him if haply we may find him"—this is not to know him; but to hear his own word concerning himself, and to believe what we hear, this is to know him, and this is life eternal.*

It is our high privilege—surely I may truly say our highest privilege—to possess in our own native language, no man hindering us, a faithful translation of the Word which God has been graciously pleased to speak concerning himself.

* St. ohn xvii. 3.

Upon a careful examination of this word we find three leading features comprising all that is made known to us of the divine character. First, self-existence; second, absolute sovereignty; third, holy love. These are compressed into a few words, and these are dilated over the whole Scriptures. "Hear, O Israel"—hear, O England—for Jehovah hath spoken: "I am the Lord thy God;" and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." All is here.

First: I AM.

Here is self-existence. Here spake the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity. His name—his descriptive name—was, is, and ever shall be, I am. With him "there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning." The end is before him from the beginning; and the beginning is with him to the end. There is no history, for there is nothing past; no prophecy, for there is nothing future; no speculation, no experiment, for there is nothing doubtful with him. Does God reason? Think of the question before you allow your mind to answer. Reasoning implies some degree of doubtfulness and difficulty. The highest reasoning powers among men are required in matters most beset with difficulty. In proportion as the things before us are simple they cease to demand reasoning; they are objects of intuition as distinct from reasoning. Then, God does not reason: for all things are open and naked to him. His universal knowledge is one in-

tuitive glance. We cannot properly say of him, "He was," for this implies something past, which is not now; we cannot properly say of him, "He will be," for this implies something future which is not now. Our only really correct saying is, "He is;" and thus he says himself, "I am."

Second: THOU SHALT.

Here is the language of absolute sovereignty; God's rightful tone to every creature, for they are all his; and "Have I not a right," he asks, "to do what I will with my own?" He is the source from which all creation has arisen, the foundation upon which all creation rests, the energy by which all creation is sustained. "Thou shalt." This is the voice of lawful authority. The creature who disregards this does so at his extreme peril, for God is able to render creation a curse, sensation agony, an eternity of consciousness an eternity of torture. "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Fear not man, a worm, nor the son of man that shall die. Fear not his reviling, his sneer, his curse, nor his sword, though he had the power, as too frequently he has the will, to use it; fear not him that can kill the body, and after that has no more that he can do; but I forewarn you whom you shall fear —fear God, and tremble at his word.

Third: HOLY LOVE.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Here is paternal love desiring the happiness of his children. He knows that

to love him would make them happy, therefore he says, "Love me;" he knows that to love him perfectly, without an intruding rival, would make them perfectly happy without intermixture of uneasiness, therefore he says, "with all thy heart."

When an intelligent creature yields an appropriate response to all this, he is in harmony with God. This is law, this is love, this is life. Consider, then, in what an appropriate response consists: it is first, conscious dependence; second, willing submission; third, grateful love.

When the sound, "I am," proceeds from the throne of the Eternal, the appropriate response in every creature is, "And I by thee; in thee I live, and move, and have my being; from thee I spring; upon thee I rest; by thee I am sustained: not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thee!"

When the sound, "Thou shalt," proceeds from the throne, the appropriate response in every creature is, "Even so, Lord, for so it seemeth good unto thee;" give me what thou wilt, keep from me what thou wilt; make me what thou wilt have me to be:—

"O Lord, my God, do thy most holy will,
I will lie still;
I will not move lest I forsake thine arm,
And break the charm,
Which keeps me leaning on my Father's breast,
In perfect rest."

When the sound, "Love me with all thy heart," proceeds from the throne, the appropriate response in every creature is love produced by love—happy

love in creature responding to the happiness-desiring love, of the Creator.

These three combined constitute eternal life. They are congeniality with God; they are the fulfilling of holy law; they are the harmony of creation. The key-notes and chords of this harmony define the leading features of the creature's duty; and the variations, still in harmony, touch in the finest and most delicate points, the various details of that duty in act, and thought, and feeling.

It is in this state the holy angels live. The very elements of their being are, conscious dependence, willing submission, and grateful love. Every sound from God, every note from the throne, reverberates among them, producing kindred sounds in sweetest echoes. This is happiness.

From this some angels departed. They "kept not their first estate." "They sinned." * Aiming at independence, they jarred against the Mighty One, and recoiled into discord. The appropriate response of the creature to the self-existence, sovereignty, and love of Jehovah, is no longer awakened in them. Thus ruined, they know it; their state is one of continual sensitiveness to this departure. They have no refuge, no screen of matter behind which they can hide themselves from the immediate view of the great Father of spirits. They are at every moment conscious of the contrariety of their being against his being. Rebellion is in their hearts: sovereignty is upon his arm; they are miserable,

* Jude 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4.

and cannot but be consciously and eternally miserable.

This view of real happiness enjoyed by the holy angels, and of the essential misery endured by the fallen angels, will help us to clearer views of man's condition, and of what is indispensable to man's real happiness.

Man was created in love, in the knowledge and enjoyment of God. The elements of his being were an appropriate response to God's character. In Adam, as proceeding from the hand of God, when God pronounced him "very good," this combination was perfect—conscious dependence, willing submission, and grateful love: there was no contradiction to this high and holy law of intelligent creation, no discord against this heavenly harmony.

But fallen man has departed from that happy state of light, and life, and love. The appropriate response is no longer awakened in him. Aiming at independence, he too has jarred against the Mighty One, and recoiled into discord. So far his condition resembles that of the fallen angels; but in another and very important respect it differs from theirs. Fallen man has a screen of flesh to hide behind,—a cage which enables the bird to shield itself from the sight of the heavens. Under favour of this shelter he has recourse for his happiness, such as it is, to things below—things visible—and endeavours to forget his high and spiritual nature. He is so stunned and stupefied that he has lost all ear for the heavenly

music, and almost lost all consciousness of the discord in which he lives. Living in sin, he has no true sense of sin, and thus he is pronounced to be "dead in sin."

How is he to be recovered? A discovery must be made to him of the state to which he has fallen, for "they that are whole desire not a physician, but they that are sick." How then can this be? The letter of the law will not do it; he has lost due respect for the Law-giver, and accuses the law itself as over strict and even unjust. Punishment will not do it: he resents the blow, and increasingly hates the hand that inflicts it; in other words, punishment increases his misery by increasing his hatred. To deprive him of the screen of flesh will not do it. This would only make him conscious of what his state is; it would not change it. This is what is done to the ungodly at their death: visible things are withdrawn; God himself confronts them. Their condition is then identified with that of the fallen angels, as the Lord Jesus Christ says to them, "Depart into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels." *

How then? By the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. The pardoning love of God! This is the first step. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Thus, the glorious gospel of the grace of God is the tuning-key of creation,

* St. Matt. xxv. 41.

and when used by the Holy Ghost, it restores man to holiness, to happiness, to God!

2. Happiness, or what is essential to happiness in every creature, must vary with the nature and capacities of the creature. To the irrational animals, all that seems needful for happiness is a sense of perfect ease. There is an enjoyment in the flow of animal life; and if this be unabated by any sense of pain, mere animal nature seems to require no more. But the case of a creature endowed with reason and immortality is vastly different; for to such a creature present ease is far from sufficient for happiness. Such a creature is not only capable of anticipation, but he is compelled to anticipate. He can as soon cease to exist, as he can cease to look forward. Unto the happiness of such a creature, therefore, there must not only be a consciousness of present enjoyment, but there must be a consciousness of security, investing that enjoyment with a character of permanence.

Every creature is absolutely and inevitably at the disposal of the Creator; and consequently security, irrespective of the will of the Creator, is out of the question; and thus we see the elements, the reasonable elements, of that momentous truth—that it is essential to the true happiness of man, that he should have, and that he should know that he has, the favour of God.

The best illustration of this is found where we might expect to find it, in the scriptural narrative, brief

as it is, of the state of things in the garden of Eden. Man, in the absence of all pain, and in the full flow of animal life, with all its supplies ready at hand, possessed that species of happiness which was appropriate to his animal part. And in the enjoyment of the favour of his God he possessed that happiness which is equally appropriate to his intellectual, moral, and immortal part. When he forfeited the favour of God, he lost his happiness. If at the same time he could have lost his conscience, his reason, his immortality, and sunk to the level of the brute creation, so that mere animal enjoyment would have been sufficient for his happiness, he might have continued happy; but losing his holiness, losing the favour of his God, without losing his immortality, his reason, and his conscience, he became inevitably disturbed; he could not be happy. We find him accordingly endeavouring to escape from the presence of his Lord God, which had till then been his constant delight; and with mingled absurdity and wickedness expecting to hide himself amongst the trees of the garden. What was this, but an effort to make the creatures a screen between him and his offended God; a vain effort to be happy without God? And what has been the effort of fallen man from that day to the present, but by various inventions of his perverted intellect, and strugglings of his wounded affections, to attempt to make himself happy, while absent and alienated from his God? If he could so debase himself as to silence his conscience altogether, and bring himself to the level of

the brute, this is one mode by which he might lose sight of the loss he has sustained, and so enjoy a present happiness. Or, if he could distort the character of God; if he could persuade himself that God is altogether such an one as he is, (Psalm l. 21,) and would connive at his iniquity, or would indulgently overlook certain iniquities, provided he was more careful in other respects, and provided he experienced some sorrow, and underwent some punishment for those transgressions—this is another mode in which he might seduce himself into present peace, under the delusion that it is possible to be safe without being holy. Or, if he could altogether pervert his reason, and bring himself to believe that there is no God—this is a third mode in which he might attain to a semblance of happiness in a fancied independence of any superior being.

These three comprise an epitome of the history of mankind. What are the sensualities of man, but an attempt to carry on the debasing process which brings him to the level of the brute? What are the false religions of man, with all their deprecating sacrifices and self-imposed austerities and toils, but an attempt to carry on a deluding system of bargaining with God, as if he were altogether such an one as man's self? And what is infidel philosophy, but an attempt to banish God out of his own creation, and leave proud man without a superior?

Hence the value, beyond the power of language to express, beyond the reach of man's heart or mind adequately to conceive, of the proclamation of the

Gospel, which is given in charge to the church to carry through the world. For what is the Gospel? It is the glad tidings of a Father's heart of love, beneath the Creator's arm of power. It is the voice of mercy that comes into the garden, to call to Adam and ask him, 'Where art thou?' to bring him forth from his wretched hiding-place; to tell him of a Redeemer, of a Rescuer from ruin, a Mediator between God and him, a sacrifice, an all-sufficient atonement made for his transgression; not that he may substitute reliance on that sacrifice for personal holiness, but that therein beholding the open bosom of his offended Father, he may return and live in that favour, that assimilating communion which produces holiness. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Nothing else can produce true holiness, and therefore nothing else can give real and permanent happiness to an intelligent immortal creature. The atonement by Jesus Christ was *made*, that a pardoning God might be just: (Rom. iii. 26:) and it is *proclaimed* that pardoned man may be sanctified. (John iv. 9, 10, 19.) It was made that God might invite man; (Isaiah xlv. 21, 22;) it is proclaimed that man may answer the invitation, and come to God. The *fact* was necessary for God's character as a governor, before angels, principalities, and powers in heavenly places. The *proclamation* of it upon earth is necessary for man's holy happiness; for he must not only have God for his friend, but he must know that he has him. As the beloved disciple exclaims, "We

have known and believed the love that God hath to us." (1 John iv. 16.)

In prolonging this proclamation, it is the will and wisdom of God to make use of the instrumentality of man. The subject is indeed full of lively interest to the holy angels. And a clear perception of its bearing in heaven and earth may be had by considering it in the point of view in which it must have presented itself to those creatures of high and holy intelligence.

They know something of what eternity is, and of what it must be for an immortal spirit to spend eternity excluded from the favour and friendship of the great Father of spirits, the living God. They have read a solemn lesson in the history of multitudes of their angelic brethren. They have witnessed the tremendous wrath of God, in the swift vengeance which fell upon those multitudes when they sinned; and they are capable of appreciating the fearful consequences to Beelzebub and his confederates in rebellion, through an eternity of torment. They witnessed the creation of our world and of our first parents, and delighting in the works of their heavenly Father, the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. What may have been their anticipations on beholding this lovely world, and Adam and Eve in their primæval purity and blessedness, it is not for man to conjecture. But when they saw the fair flower blighted, when they saw the rebel angel, the enemy

of their great Creator and gracious Upholder, permitted to succeed against the new-formed world, and entice the happy man and woman into a kindred rebellion, we may conceive with what holy awe they turned to contemplate the as yet unexplored depths of their incomprehensible God! They expected, probably, the destruction of the earth, and the same vengeance to fall on guilty man that had fallen on guilty angels. But such was not Jehovah's plan. The world was spared. Man was spared. Men multiplied and replenished the earth. Yes, and angels were sent from time to time on errands of love to the fallen race. Some glimpses were probably afforded of the designs of God, when the Eternal Word himself deigned to visit the abodes of sin and sorrow, and hold communication with patriarchs and prophets; but still the mystery was concealed from ages and generations, and the wondering angels desired to look into the ways of the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity.

At last the fulness of time arrived for the development of one essential part of the great design. Self-manifestation is the purpose of God. His *whole* character must be known, that he may have from every region, and for ever, the praise due to his name. Mercy, infinite, eternal mercy, formed a depth yet unexplored in the divine character. The holy angels, objects of his love, did not require mercy. The fallen angels, objects of his wrath, did not receive mercy. Man was the fore-ordained

vessel of mercy; of free rich mercy, conferred upon the miserable, the helpless, the wicked, without the slightest compromise of high, unbending, infinite, eternal justice. In this was to be exhibited to angels and principalities, and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God.* To the accomplishment of this divine purpose, Jehovah himself moved from his everlasting glory, and in the person of his eternal Son, equal to the Father, took man's nature unto himself, in the unity of one person.

This is the wondrous work of the incarnation. The facts are plainly recorded, but without controversy, great is the mystery involved in those facts. That the Almighty, who originally created man's body of the dust of the earth, and added thereto an immortal spirit, had *power* to cause a virgin to conceive in her womb, cannot be reasonably denied or doubted. That he exercised that power, is the foundation fact of revealed religion. We believe it—and it is a perversion of language and truth to call any one a Christian who does not believe it. The child so conceived was in due time born. Thus was prepared a being such as had never been before, divine and human in one person! And thus preparation was made for a work such as had never been performed before. A work of mercy. The object of it was lost rebellious man. The author of it was God. The execution of it, while it discovered the depth of mercy in the divine bosom, fully main-

* Ephes. iii. 10.

tained the already discovered heights of justice in the divine government.

As the wondrous person thus constituted was human, made of a woman, made under the law, the righteous vengeance of Jehovah against human transgression of his law, could fall upon him and take effect upon him, both soul and body. And as he was divine, he possessed the infinite capacity of concentrating upon himself and exhausting the tremendous vengeance.

In the foresight of this work, and on the credit of it, as it possessed certainty in his own mind, God had been sparing, yea, saving sinful men, and taking them to everlasting glory. This had been going on for four thousand years. The astonished hosts of heaven seem to have waited in trembling anxiety for God's explanation of this mysterious proceeding. Something of it must have been revealed to them, when one of their number, Gabriel, was sent to the selected virgin of Galilee to tell her what God designed to do in her, and by her. Yet still, they do not seem to have penetrated the mystery, for on that occasion we read of no song of joy and praise among them.

But on the morning when the child was born, and one of the angelic company was commissioned to proclaim the glad tidings to the shepherds at Bethlehem, no sooner were the blessed words uttered, than suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and

saying, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

" Glory to God in the highest." This song must be prolonged; this is the harmony of creation; no holy angel would join any song which interfered with this; nay, which did not recognise this, and introduce it as the first and chiefest part.

" Glory to God in the highest!" The scheme of salvation manifested—justice satisfied in the nature that rebelled—sin and death destroyed in the nature that sinned and died—the devil conquered in the nature which had been conquered by him! The glorious majesty of the great Jehovah shines forth in a blaze of harmonised perfections.

" Glory to God in the highest." New discoveries in the unfathomable depth of his character and resources, are made to the countless hosts of heaven. They sing his praise anew, and the echo of their song resounds in revelation here on earth; " Peace, good will towards men." Themselves, too, are sent forth as " ministering spirits, to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.)

But the proclamation of the Gospel is committed to men; first, to men chosen and appointed by the Lord himself, and after them, to men commissioned by them, and continued in constant succession. God has deposited the glad tidings in earthen vessels, and commanded his poor helpless servants—fellow-sinners with those whom they address—to go, and

carry his blessed word over all the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature. Amongst the men so employed there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And in the work there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. (1 Cor. xii. 4—6.)

Believing that our heavenly Father works by means, and seeing in his providence (at least over this our native land) the mighty working upon men's minds of what is called public opinion; seeing also how the voice of comparatively few, if forward and clamorous, may be mistaken for the general voice, and thus become more and more influential, unless there be a counter-tone raised—a rallying point for the quiet majority—and raised loudly and in detail: it is my deliberate conviction that it has now become the duty of every watchman, who sincerely loves our church and nation; however insignificant be may be in himself, however humble his station, however moderate his talents, however inconsiderable the additional light he may be able to throw on the subject, faithfully and honestly to declare in his place, the convictions of his understanding and conscience, on the questions involved in this great thesis—THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST—and THE WHOLE STATE OF CHRIST'S CHURCH MILITANT HERE ON EARTH.

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give to the writer of these pages, and to

every one who shall read them, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be HEAD over all things to THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." *

* Eph. i. 16—23.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST.—ITS CATHOLICITY.

The Church not always used in the same sense—The election—Rom. ix.*—Mr. Faber's view of the primitive doctrine of election examined—Ephes.* i. 3—5.*—Dr. Graves on predestination—Our Lord's language—St. Paul to the Thessalonians—Bishop Jewell on ditto—Dogmatic theology of the Church of England on this point—The purpose of God perfect—The performance progressive and still unfinished—The constituent parts of the Church of God in Christ—Its true Catholicity—The Head—The members—One body.*

It cannot be denied by any unprejudiced reader of Holy Scripture, that the expression "Church" is used in a variety of senses in the sacred volume. In the part of the subject now to come under immediate consideration, I of course use the word only in one of those scriptural senses. If, therefore, some other sense of the word should suggest itself to the mind of any reader, I have to request the exercise of a little patience. If any man think, that surely the Church is used in Scripture in a very different sense from that in which I shall now use it,

let him think again, that as it is used in a different sense, so also it is used in this sense; let him remember that the Truth himself, when urged by the saying, "It is written," answered, "It is written *again*;" (St. Matt. iv. 6, 7;) and let not his convictions concerning one scriptural meaning of the word interfere with his candid acquiescence in another meaning equally scriptural.*

* Doctor Barrow, in his Discourse on the Unity of the Church, enumerates the meanings of the word under the following five heads:—

"1. Sometimes any assembly or company of Christians is called a church; as when mention is made of the church in such a house; (whence Tertullian saith, 'Where there are three, even laics, there is a church.') (Tert. de Exh. Cast. cap. 7.)

"2. Sometimes a particular society of Christians, living in spiritual communion, and under discipline, as when the church at such a town; the churches of such a province; the churches; all the churches are mentioned: according to which notions St. Cyprian saith that there is a church, where there is a 'people united to a priest, and a flock adhering to their shepherd;' (Cypr. Ep. 69;) and so Ignatius saith, 'That without the orders of the clergy a church is not called.' (Ignat. ad Tral.)

"3. A large collection of divers particular societies combined together in order, under direction and influence of a common government, or of persons acting in the public behalf, is termed a church; as the church of Antioch, of Corinth, of Jerusalem, &c., each of which at first probably might consist of divers congregations, having dependence of less towns annexed to them; all being united under the care of the bishops and presbytery of those places; but, however, soon after the apostles' times, it is certain that such collections were, and were named churches.

"4. The society of those who at present, or in course of time,

We shall advance in due time to the uses of the word as it is applied to various communities among men; each of them composing a church, and all of them together comprising the whole state of Christ's church militant here on earth. But at present we are to contemplate the church of God, not as dwelling upon earth in any of the successive generations of mankind, but as composing the body of Christ in its completeness from the first to the last, "accord-

profess the faith and gospel of Christ, and undertake the evangelical covenant, in distinction to all other religions, particularly that of the Jews, which is called the synagogue.

"5. The whole body of God's people that ever hath been, or ever shall be, from the beginning of the world to the consummation thereof, who having (formally or virtually) believed in Christ, and sincerely obeyed God's laws, shall finally, by the meritorious performances and sufferings of Christ, be saved, is called the church.

"Of these acceptions the two latter do only come under present consideration; it being plain that St. Paul doth not speak of any one particular or present society; but of all, *at all times*, who have relation to the same Lord, faith, hope, sacraments, &c.

"Wherefore, to determine the case between these two, we must observe that to the latter of these (that is, to the catholic society of true believers and faithful servants of Christ, diffused through all ages, dispersed through all countries, whereof part doth sojourn on earth, part doth reside in heaven, part is not yet extant; but all whereof is described in the register of divine preordination, and shall be re-collected at the resurrection of the just; that, I say, to this church) especially all the glorious titles and excellent privileges attributed to the church in holy Scripture do agree."

ing to the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ephes. iii. 11.)

It is easy, and I regret to say it is common, with some prominent writers of our own times, to treat this branch of divine truth with little short of contempt; to affix, without proof, some comparatively modern name upon it as its originator, and thereupon to turn away from it in scorn, as from a Calvinistic or Lutheran invention, unworthy of their catholic consideration.*

I have said this is easy; and doubtless it is found much more convenient than a refutation of the doctrines of Calvin or Luther, not to mention St.

* Bishop Horsley, in a Charge delivered to the Clergy of St. Asaph, August, 1806, gives the following caution. It is far from obsolete. "Take special care, before you aim your shafts at Calvinism, that you know what is Calvinism and what is not; that in the mass of doctrine which it is of late become the fashion to abuse under the name of Calvinism, you distinguish with certainty between that part which is nothing better than Calvinism, and that which belongs to our common Christianity, and the faith of the reformed churches."

And Archbishop Magee said to the assembled clergy of Raphoe, in 1821, "The true christian teacher should not be deterred from setting forth the great fundamental doctrines which the Articles contain, by the imputation of particular names which ignorance may attach to those doctrines. . . . . Thus, for example, nothing is more common at the present day than to hear a person pronounced to be a Calvinist, because he holds the doctrine of original sin, or of justification by faith; whereas he might with equal justice be so denominated for holding the doctrines of the Trinity or the Atonement."

Augustine; or a fair examination in their contexts of the broad and reiterated statements of the apostles and prophets. I observe that one of the immediate consequences of so foreclosing this branch of the subject is, that the writers who do so, proceed to apply to other branches of truth those passages of Scripture which in their contexts do of right belong to this; thereby introducing confusion, and of course obscurity: and they seem to feel themselves perfectly justified in so doing, if they can produce a few citations from some ancient writers, fallible like themselves, in which, without proof or context or argument, the Scripture is so used.

But we must not allow this part of the subject to be foreclosed. It is vital. Had it not been spoken by the Lord Jesus, and written by the apostles, "being witnessed by the law and the prophets," nothing would have been revealed deserving the emphatic name of Gospel:—glad tidings to guilty and helpless men; and had it not been revived after long neglect, by the Refomrers, (when the Bible became their study,) nothing would have been achieved deserving the name of reformation. It is strictly in character, that those who reject this portion of divine truth, should depreciate by every art in their power the character and works of the Reformers; and elevate the traditions of men into the chair of authoritative interpretation of Scripture, even where those traditions are plainly condemned by the sacred contexts, or by the articles of their own church, derived from those contexts.

I am altogether prepared for the ready retort, "Plainly condemned *in your opinion!*" and for the plausible question, "Where is the modesty of setting your private judgment in opposition to the voice of the church catholic?" My answer is, "I am guilty of no such presumption. The church catholic has uttered no voice upon the subject. Individual writers in various ages of the church's history have uttered their own convictions, and given their own opinions; they could do no more; and the modern writer who coincides in opinion with Chrysostom or Cyprian, exercises his private judgment as freely as another who coincides in opinion with Jerome or Augustine, or a third, who, perceiving that it is at least as difficult (and much less profitable) to interpret the fathers as it is to interpret the apostles, exclaims, "Unus Paulus præ mille Augustinis."

If it be alleged that the fathers are all plainly of one and the same opinion on the subject now to be considered, and that, therefore, their united voice should be received as a catholic judgment; the answer simply is, that the allegation is unfounded. The fathers differ as widely as their successors.* In

* For a specimen of this see the note at page 43.

What the Bishop of Meaux said upon the subject of prophetic interpretation, may with equal truth be said concerning the doctrine of election. "Quand quelques docteurs, même catholiques, font trop hardiment des traditions constantes et des articles de foi, des conjectures de quelques Pères; on peut, et l'on doit, ré-

the full foresight, however, of having a bonâ fide appeal to the Scriptures condemned by some even of those who have subscribed our 6th Article, but in the earnest prayer and humble hope of being useful to many others, I proceed.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST is "the election of grace." There is a strong repugnance in the human mind to admit, without abusing, this branch of truth; and the seat of it appears to be an intuitive dread of interfering, by the admission, with the moral perfections of the divine character. *Considered in itself*, it is far from unreasonable; nay, rather sound reason seems to demand it as inseparable from infinite wisdom and infinite power.

"We say usually, that where there is little wisdom, there is much chance; and comparatively amongst men, some are far more foresighted, and of further reach than others; yet the wisest and most provident men, both wanting skill to design all things aright, and power to act as they contrive, meet with many unexpected casualties and frequent disappointments in their undertakings. But with God, where both reason and power are infinite,

pondre, que les autres docteurs n'y consentent pas; que les Pères ont varié sur tous ces sujets, ou sur le plupart, qu'il n'y a donc point de tradition constante et uniforme en beaucoup de points, où des docteurs, même catholiques ont pretendu en trouver; en un mot, que c'est ici une affaire, non de dogme ni d'autorité, mais de conjectures."—*Bossuet*, Pref. sur l'Apoc. No. 13.

there can be neither chance, nor resistance from without, nor any imperfection at all in the contrivance of things within himself, that can give cause to add, or abate, or alter anything in the frame of his purposes. The model of the whole world, and of all the course of time, was with him one and the same from all eternity; and whatsoever is brought to pass, is exactly answerable with that pattern, for with him there is no change nor shadow of turning. (James i. 17.) There is nothing dark to the Father of lights; he sees at one view through all things, and all ages, from the beginning of time to the end of it, yea from eternity to eternity." *

Against this, viewed directly, no reasonable objection can be urged: but the application of it to men in their varying characters and final destinations to either happiness or misery, brings it into contact with other truths; and *there* it presents itself to the human mind as so arbitrary on the part of God, so partial towards the elect, so unjust and cruel towards the non-elect, and so utterly subversive of the foundations of true morality in man, that all sorts of attempts—learned and unlearned—have been made to evade it, and explain away the words of Holy Scripture which expressly assert it.

But why need this be? May we, must we, not reasonably admit that many things may be true concerning God and his ways, which are far above and beyond our understandings? Is not such admission indispensable towards the production and mainte-

* *Archbishop Leighton*, 1 Pet. i. 20.

nance in our minds of right feelings of reverence and solemnity in our meditations on God? Is there not in man a craving for mystery? And if God were divested of mystery—either in the mode of his existence in himself, or of his dealings with his creatures—could he continue to be all-sufficient for man? Our reasonable admissions concerning God's infinite perfections in himself, and our moral instincts as to what fairness and impartiality seem to demand in his dealings with us, invite to conflicting conclusions: and it is man's littleness to attempt to simplify the problem by denying or evading either set of premises. The fairness and impartiality of God as a moral Governor are undoubted—shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? The absoluteness of God as a Sovereign is of equal authority: "He hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (See also Dan. iv. 35.) Let both stand unabated, uncompromised; and in the full disk of the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY so revealed, man finds an adequate object for all his powers both of mind and action. In some features he discovers the elements of all moral activity and diligence; in others, of all prostration in veiled adoring worship.

In their attempts to extract "the heart of the mystery," some writers endeavour to separate election from any certainty of salvation, and so represent it as an election to outward national and ecclesiastical opportunities. These persons do not deny the absoluteness of election in itself, as the act of

God; but they limit its results to such present opportunities as may not be improved; so that the elect in this sense may after all be lost, and thus all appearance of arbitrary partiality for eternity, seems to be removed.

Others, seeing that election is connected, by the Apostles, with obedience, and holy love, and eternal life; and that consequently its results cannot be fairly limited to present and possibly abortive opportunities; endeavour to explain away its absoluteness, by saying that the individuals elected to salvation are so elected because of their foreseen faith, and obedience, and love.

There is a truth in each of these With the former, we agree that election is absolute; and with the latter, we agree that election is of individuals to eternal life. In meeting the objected difficulty; as St. Paul did not avail himself of either of these explanations, neither do we; but with the Apostle resolve the matter into the good and supreme pleasure of God, the helplessness and ignorance of man. The reader's earnest attention is requested to the following brief exposition of Rom. ix.

Having declared and lamented the "casting away" of the Jews, the Apostle is met by the objection, that to represent the people of God as thus cast away seems to amount to an assertion that the word of God had taken no effect among them; and as this would be contrary to the gracious promise made to that word, he immediately meets it; saying,

" Not as though the word of God hath taken *none* effect." It has indeed taken effect in strict accordance with the promise, not on all the nation of Israel, but on all the election out of that nation. " For they are not all Israel" (the election) " who are of Israel" (the nation). True, they are all the descendants of Abraham, but what then? " Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they *all* children;" but " in Isaac shall thy seed be called." That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise. " At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." The separation which had just taken place in the apostle's days, between Jews cast away and Jews converted, had been illustrated, and therein typically predicted, by the facts which had taken place in the house of Abraham. Those cast away had been represented by Ishmael, born after the flesh, and not the children of God: and those converted, of whom Paul himself was one, had been represented by Isaac, born according to God's promise, and by God's secret supernatural interference. " The children of the promise are counted for the seed."

" And not only this." For on this branch of the argument, illustrated by reference to this portion of the patriarchal history, an objector may still urge that the separation and selection of Isaac arose not from any absolute purpose in God, but from the

misconduct of Ishmael justly provoking God to cast him off. This objection, however, is fully met and answered by a further illustration derived from the next important clause in the patriarchal history. The case of Isaac illustrates the special interference of God, above and beyond the ordinary course of nature. The case of Jacob illustrates the absoluteness of God's choice, irrespective of man's works, whether good or evil. The Apostle, therefore, having referred to the case of Isaac for its appropriate lesson, adds, "And not only this: but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This teaches an additional lesson in christian doctrine. It is vain to say that the predicted superiority of Jacob over his elder brother consisted in *temporal* prosperity. This is granted as a matter of fact: but the question is, what did this signify? What point of christian doctrine did this fact illustrate? It is mere evasion to fasten attention here, on the details of the history; instead of attending to the use made by the Apostle of the single historical fact, that before the children were born, and of course before they could have given occasion by their conduct for any such thing, God had deter-

mined and announced that the elder should serve the younger. This fact, viewed as the Apostle viewed it, supplies a proof of the election of grace, and gives rise to an apparent objection which would be wholly uncalled for, but for this application of the fact. "What shall we say, then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" Such a notion would never have been suggested by the mere temporal history of Jacob and Esau, considered in itself; but if that history be referred to, not simply for its own facts considered in themselves, but because those facts were significantly typical, illustrating the election of grace, not of works, the casting away of some Jews in the Apostle's time, and the gracious conversion of others; then, the objection does seem to arise, and this is, in truth, what gave rise to it.

The Apostle's answer to it is not one of reasoning addressed to the human understanding, but one of authority, appealing to the sovereign will of God. "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For *he saith* to Moses, *I will* have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." This high and absolute declaration from him who has a right to do what he will with his own, was conclusive in the Apostle's mind. "So then," he adds, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Neither is this all. As far as the sovereign exercise of special *mercy* is concerned, this is indeed

abundantly sufficient for every humbled mind; but the great truth before us wears another and still more solemn aspect; and another historical fact, significantly typical, is referred to in illustration of it. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Whatever may be said of the history of Pharaoh in other respects, or whatever explanations may be offered of one remarkable fact recorded in it, the fact itself is undeniable, viz., that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.* To this it is evident the Apostle specially refers, because the conclusion he draws from the whole is, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Here, of course, the objection recurs, though not exactly in the same form. Before, it supposed unrighteousness in God, because of his arbitrary mercy: here, it supposes non-responsibility in man, because of God's arbitrary hardening. And the fact that the objection assumes this aspect amounts to a proof that the apostolical doctrine eliciting it, and without which it could have had no appearance of force, and would never have been started, had in the preceding passage assumed this aspect. The objection is, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" On the supposition that the Apostle's reference to the history of

* Exod. vii. 3, 13; ix. 12; x. 20, 27; xi. 10.

Pharaoh, as an illustration of christian doctrine, is here correctly interpreted; this is precisely the objection which seems to arise so strongly against it. Does he then meet the objection by a different interpretation of that history? By no means. He meets it by another and still more overwhelming reference to the rightful majesty and absolute sovereignty of Almighty God, contrasted with the ignorance and insignificance of his creature: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" It must be confessed that, to the *reasoning* faculty in man, there is not much satisfaction in this answer; and that in order to be satisfied with it, man's will must be subdued under God's authority.

If it be asked again, How then, indeed, is man responsible? I answer, not because of any doubtfulness, or indecision, or absence of fore-ordination in the mind of God; but because of man's own ignorance. This is capable of a simple, and as it appears to me, a very striking illustration. St. Peter informs us, that the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, a sacrifice for the sins of men, was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.* Suppose this truth to have been made known to Adam

* 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

before his fall, viz., that previous to his creation or the foundation of the world, God had fore-ordained a sacrifice for his sins—this information would have greatly embarrassed him. He might have said, What! *must* I sin, then? Must I give opportunity for the fulfilment of this fore-ordained purpose? His liberty and responsibility would thus have been invaded by his knowledge. But was it not true, although Adam knew it not? The Holy Ghost, by St. Peter, has assured us that it was; and so we see, that to keep Adam free and morally responsible, it was necessary to keep him in some degree of ignorance. We are very ignorant. If we feel and acknowledge this, and bow before *all* the revealed truth of God, however apparently irreconcilable, we are wise; but if we exalt our own wisdom, or supposed wisdom, so as to make its deductions a ground for denying, or evading, or explaining away *any portion* of Holy Scripture, we are fools, and know nothing yet as we ought to know. Has any man *all the case*, in *all* its bearings, clearly before him, when he decides on any given question? Surely not. There remains in the wisest man some ignorance of something connected with the case before him. An ignorant understanding will, or at least may, lead to a false or erroneous determination, though that determination be made without anything approaching to compulsion. This is the fact, and thus the will is free and not free: free, inasmuch as it acts without compulsion; not free, in-

asmuch as it acts in the dark. It is not *tied*, and therefore it may go: but it is in some measure *blind*, and therefore cannot be depended upon to go right. Hence the petition of the psalmist, in which every true Christian will cordially unite—ENLIGHTEN me, O Lord! TEACH me to do thy will!

In further illustration of these statements, I refer to one of the most distinguished of modern writers upon this subject: a reverend brother in our national Established Church, to whose clear exposition of Scripture on many points, and logical arrangement of his practical deductions therefrom, I gladly avow myself to be much and gratefully indebted. I mean the Reverend George Stanley Faber, Master of Sherburn Hospital, and Prebendary of Salisbury.

Mr. Faber, in his work on the Primitive Doctrine of Election, writes as if the term election could have but one scriptural meaning and application: and having ascertained what he considers the primitive and true one, he concludes to his own satisfaction, that every other is erroneous. He rejects, as alike untenable, because alike comparatively modern, three several systems.

(1.) The absolute election of individuals to eternal salvation. This, although now very generally called by the name of Calvin, he pronounces to be an invention of Augustine in the fifth century, (pp. 74, 75,) and wholly opposed to the primitive doctrine. It may be fairly questioned whether some of the citations adduced by Mr. Faber in support of his

own view, do not prove that the early ecclesiastical writers advocated what Mr. Faber condemns. His first testimony is that of Clement of Rome, from whom he quotes the following, amongst other passages. (p. 232, 233.)

Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ᾧ οὐ μὴ λογίσηται Κύριος ἁμαρτίαν· οὐδὲ ἐστιν ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ δόλος. Οὗτος ὁ μακαρισμὸς ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐκλελεγμένους ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· Epis. ad Cor. i. § 50. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin: neither is there craft in his mouth. This blessing is upon those who have been *elected* by God through Jesus Christ." And again: Φησὶ γὰρ ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς Δαβὶδ· Ἐξομολογήσομαι τῷ Κυρίῳ. Ibid. i. § 52. "The *elect* David saith: I will confess unto the Lord."

In the former of these passages, the great primary and distinguishing blessing of Christianity, the non-imputation of sin, is declared to belong to those, and by fair implication to those only, who have been elected by God, through Jesus Christ: and in the latter, an individual is specified and called elect.

Mr. Faber's second witness is Ignatius, the disciple of St. John. From him the following passage is adduced. (pp. 233, 234.)

Ἰγνάτιος, ὁ καὶ Θεοφόρος, τῇ εὐλογημένῃ ἐν μεγέθει Θεοῦ Πατρὸς πληρώματι, τῇ προωρισμένῃ πρὸ αἰώνων διὰ παντὸς εἰς δόξαν, παράμονον, ἄτρεπτον, ἡνωμένην, καὶ ἐκλελεγμένην, ἐν πάθει ἀληθινῷ, ἐν θελήματι τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ ἀξιομακαρίστῳ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας, πλεῖστα ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ καὶ ἐν ἀμώμῳ χάριτι χαίρειν. Epis.

ad Ephes. § 1. "Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, to the Church which is in Ephesus of Asia, deserving beatification, blessed in the greatness and fulness of God the Father, ALWAYS PREDESTINATED BEFORE THE WORLDS TO GLORY,"—I adopt Mr. Faber's translation, these capitals also are his,—"that it should be permanent, and unchangeable, and united, and ELECTED in true suffering, according to the will of the Father and of Jesus Christ our God, wisheth most abundant joy in Jesus Christ, and in blameless grace."

Here, *the Church* addressed by Ignatius, is expressly described as *always predestinated before the worlds to glory*—to glory! Yet this is precisely what Mr. Faber denies, identifying election with present ecclesiastical privileges, but not with glory or eternal life. He says, (p. 249,) "The ideality of the word *election*, with a Calvinist and an Arminian, is an election of certain individuals to eternal life; for widely as they differ in their views of the principle of causation, they equally make eternal life the immediate and direct object, or purpose, or business of election. But, with the primitive Christians, anterior to the time of Augustine, the ideality of the word election was an election of certain individuals from all nations into the Church, with the object and intention, indeed, of their attaining to eternal life through the powerful instrumentality of those means of grace which constituted their high ecclesiastical privileges; but still, through sin and perverseness, with a possibility of their not attaining to

it: for, with the primitive Christians, the *immediate* purpose or business of election was not eternal life itself, but an entrance into the visible church in order to a thus mediate attainment of eternal life."

I must confess that this statement, instead of being a legitimate exposition of the words of Ignatius, appears to me to be in direct opposition to them. It is laboured, and to my mind, not successfully,—at once admitting and evading the truth. I do not suppose for a moment that the writer designed any evasion; yet the attempt here made to recognise a connexion between election and eternal life, and still to deny any *immediate* or necessary connexion, seems to me to avoid, rather than explain, the real question at issue. I greatly prefer the simplicity of the primitive father, who describes the Church as "always predestinated before the worlds, to glory."

The next primitive witness is Hermas, from whom, after giving several passages in which *the holy church* and *the elect* seem to be used as synonymes, Mr. Faber quotes the following, p. 236:—

"Alba autem pars superventuri est sæculi, in quo habitabunt electi Dei: quoniam immaculati et puri erunt electi Dei in vitam æternam. Tu ergo ne desinas loqui hæc auribus sanctorum." (Herm. Past. lib. i. vis. 4, § 3.) Which he thus translates: "The white part represents the age about to come, in which shall dwell the elect of God: for *the elect of God shall be pure and immaculate to eternal life.* Cease not thou, therefore, to speak these things in the ears of the saints."

Here, again, election is distinctly declared to be unto eternal life; in verbal and pointed contradiction to Mr. Faber's conclusion. He says, (p. 247,) "By the church of the elect they (the primitive Christians) understood, not an invisible and mystical church, every member of which was irreversibly elected and predestinated to eternal life; but the visible church catholic, which comprehended a mixture both of good and bad, and of which the elect members might fall away to eternal perdition." Yet one of his own selected witnesses says plainly, "The elect of God shall be pure and immaculate to eternal life."

This, be it observed, is not said in the way of exhortation, describing what the elect of God ought to be, and must be, if they would attain to eternal life: it is said in the way of prophecy, describing the world to come in which the elect shall dwell, and describing the elect as distinct from the men of this world among whom they dwell at present. The section from the beginning is thus translated by Archbishop Wake:—

"Then I asked her concerning the four colours which the beast had upon its head. But she answered me, saying, 'Again thou art curious in that thou askest concerning these things.' And I said unto her, 'Lady, show me what they are.' 'Hear,' said she; 'the black which thou sawest denotes the world in which you dwell. The fiery and bloody colour signifies that this age must be de-

stroyed by fire and blood. The golden part are ye who have escaped out of it; for as gold is tried by fire, and is made profitable, so are ye also in like manner tried who dwell among the men of this world. They, therefore, that shall endure to the end, and be proved by them, shall be purged. And as gold by this trial is cleansed and loses its dross, so shall ye also cast away all sorrow and trouble, and be made pure for the building of the tower. But the white colour denotes the time of the world which is to come, in which the elect of God shall be pure and immaculate unto life eternal.' "

It is, I think, obvious that the writer of this, a Millennarian, speaking of the expected kingdom of Christ as " the world to come," (see Heb. ii. 5,) applies the term, elect of God, not to all who profess the religion of Christ in this world, but only to those who shall eventually dwell in the kingdom of Christ in the world to come: in other words, not, as Mr. Faber concludes, to the visible church catholic, in virtue of her ecclesiastical privileges, but only to those who through grace stand the trial, and endure to the end.

(2.) The system of Arminianism is thus defined by Mr. Faber: " The election of certain individuals, out of the great mass of mankind, directly and immediately to eternal life: the *moving cause* of that election being, God's eternal prevision of the future persevering holiness and consequent moral fitness of the individuals themselves, who thence have been

thus elected." (p. 14.) And in a note afterwards, he says, "Arminianism makes the divinely foreseen holiness of particular individuals to be *the cause* of their election." (p. 16.)

This scheme he rejects as "a mere human invention, which, having been introduced subsequent to the original delivery of the gospel, can only be deemed an unauthoritative adulteration." (p. 17.)

I do not think that the cause of truth requires any defence of this scheme. Those who think otherwise, and deem the inquiry of sufficient consequence, may endeavour to rescue it from Mr. Faber's historical condemnation.*

* The scheme, thus discarded by Mr. Faber, was advocated by Chrysostom with his usual amplifying and sonorous eloquence: while the opposite scheme, distinguished by Mr. Faber as Calvinistic, was advocated by Jerome.

Ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τοὺς λέγοντας, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἡ πίστις ὠφελεῖ, καὶ ἀπιστοῦντας τῇ ἀθρόᾳ μεταβολῇ. Καὶ ὅρα πῶς ταχέως αὐτοὺς ἐπεστόμισεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀξιώματος τοῦ ἐκλεξαμένου. Καὶ οὐκ εἶπε, τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ τῶν δούλων τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐδὲ κατὰ τῶν πιστῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ, Κατὰ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἡ γὰρ ἐκλογὴ ἀρετῆς σημεῖόν ἐστιν. Εἰ γὰρ ἐπειδὰν πωλοδάμνης πώλους ἐκλέξηται ἐπιτηδείους πρὸς τὸν δρόμον, οὐδεὶς ἐπισκῆψαι δυνήσεται, ἀλλὰ καταγέλαστος ἔσται, κἂν ἐγκαλέσῃ τις· πολλῷ μᾶλλον ὅταν ὁ Θεὸς ἐκλέγηται ψυχὰς; κ. τ. λ.

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Εἶδες πῶς οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ τοῦτο μόνον συμβαίνει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ παιδὸς, καὶ πανταχοῦ πίστις καὶ ἀρετή ἐστιν ἡ διαλάμπουσα, καὶ τὴν ἀκριβῆ συγγένειαν χαρακτηρίζουσα; Ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ μανθάνομεν, ὅτι οὐ μόνον διὰ τὸν τρόπον τῆς γεννήσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ ἄξιοι εἶναι τῆς ἀρετῆς τοῦ γεγεννηκότος, οἱ παῖδες καλοῦνται παῖδες

(3.) The third system examined and rejected by Mr. Faber is what he calls *nationalism*. His introductory description of it is thus given: "By the Nationalists, the idea of election is determined to be,

ἐκείνου. Εἰ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς γεννήσεως μόνον, ἔδει καὶ τὸν Ἡσαῦ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀπολαῦσαι τῷ Ἰακώβ· καὶ γὰρ καὶ οὗτος ἀπὸ νενεκρωμένης μήτρας ἦν, καὶ στεῖρα ἦν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ. Ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦτο ἦν τὸ ζητούμενον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ τρόπος, ὅπερ οὐ τὸ τυχὸν καὶ εἰς βίου συμβάλλεται διδασκαλίαν ἡμῖν. Καὶ οὐ λέγει, ὅτι ἐπεὶ δὴ ὁ μὲν ἀγαθὸς, ὁ δὲ πονηρὸς, διὰ τοῦτο προετιμήθη, ἵνα μὴ εὐθέως ἀντιπέσῃ αὐτῷ τοῦτο· τί οὖν; ἀγαθοὶ οἱ ἐξ ἐθνῶν μαλλον, ἢ οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς; Εἰ γὰρ καὶ οὕτως εἶχεν ἡ τοῦ πράγματος ἀλήθεια, ἀλλ' οὔπω αὐτὸ τίθησι· καὶ γὰρ ἐδόκει φορτικώτερον εἶναι· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ γνῶσιν τὸ πᾶν ἔῤῥιψεν, ᾗτινι μαχέσασθαι οὐδεὶς ἂν ἐτόλμησεν, οὐδὲ εἰ σφόδρα μαινόμενος ἦν. Μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων, φησὶ, μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν, ἐῤῥέθη αὐτῇ, ὅτι Ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι. καὶ δείκνυσιν, ὅτι ἡ κατὰ σάρκα εὐγένεια οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ, ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς ἀρετὴν δεῖ ζητεῖν, ἣν καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἔργων ὁ Θεὸς οἶδε. Μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων, φησὶ, μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν, ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ Θεοῦ μένῃ, ἐῤῥέθη αὐτῇ, ὅτι Ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι. Τοῦτο γὰρ προγνώσεως, τὸ καὶ ἐξ ὠδίνων αὐτῶν ἐκλέγεσθαι· ἵνα φανῇ, φησὶ, τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ ἐκλογὴ ἡ κατὰ πρόθεσιν καὶ πρόγνωσιν γενομένη· ἐκ πρώτης γὰρ ἡμέρας καὶ τὸν ἀγαθὸν, καὶ τὸν οὐ τοιοῦτον καὶ οἶδε καὶ ἐκήρυξε. Μὴ τοίνυν μοι λέγε, ὅτι νόμον, φησὶν, ἀνέγνως καὶ προφήτας, καὶ τοσοῦτον ἐδούλευσας χρόνον. Ὁ γὰρ εἰδὼς ψυχὴν καὶ δοκιμάζειν, οὗτος οἶδε καὶ τίς ἄξιός ἐστι σωθῆναι, κ. τ. λ.—Chrysost. in Rom. viii. and ix.

"Quod autem electos nos, ut essemus sancti et immaculati coram ipso, hoc est, Deo ante fabricam mundi testatus est, ad prescientiam Dei pertinet: cui omnia futura jam facta sunt, et antequam fiant universa sunt nota. Sicut et Paulus ipse prædestinatur in utero matris suæ, et Jeremias in vulva sanctificatur, eligitur, roboratur, et in typo Christi propheta gentibus mittitur."

* * * * *

"Quod autem est, ut essemus sancti et immaculati coram eo,"

the election of certain whole nations into the pale of the visible church catholic, which election, however, relates purely to their privileged condition in this world, extending not to their collective eternal state

inter sanctum et immaculatum hoc interest, quod sanctus et immaculatus quoque intelligi potest; immaculatus vero non statim et sanctus. Parvuli quippe immaculati sunt, quia integro corpore nullum fecere peccatum, et tamen non sancti, quia sanctitas voluntate et studio comparatur; et quod immaculatus dici potest ille qui peccata non fecit; sanctus autem is qui virtutibus plenus sit; juxta illud quod in quodam Psalmo scribitur "qui ambulat sine macula, et operatur justitiam." Et in cantico canticorum, "Tota speciosa es proxima mea, et macula non est in te."

"Quæritur quomodo sanctus quis et immaculatus sit coram Deo, quum propheta testetur, dicens, "Non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens." Aut enim sancti immaculati coram Deo Ephesii sunt, et falsum est hoc quod dicitur—non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens,—aut si nemo justificatur in conspectu Dei, falsum est quod præcessit, sanctos et immaculatos esse in conspectu Dei.

"Ad quod bifariam est respondendum: non enim ait Paulus: elegit nos ante constitutionem mundi *quum* essemus sancti et immaculati: sed elegit nos *ut essemus* sancti et immaculati, hoc est, qui sancti et immaculati ante non fuimus, ut postea essemus. Quod et de peccatoribus ad meliora conversis dici potest; et stabit illa sententia—non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens—id est in tota vita sua, in omni quo in mundo isto conversatus est tempore. Quod quidem ita intellectum, et adversum eum facit qui ante quam mundus fieret, animas dicit electas esse propter sanctitatem et nullum vitium peccatorum. Non enim ut ante jam diximus, eleguntur Paulus, et qui ei similes sunt, quia erant sancti et immaculati: sed eliguntur, et prædestinantur, ut in consequenti vita, per opera atque virtutes, sancti et immaculati fiant. Deinde et sic sentiendum est, quia non dixerit—non justi-

in another world. And the *moving cause* of that election is pronounced to be, that same absolute good pleasure of God, which, through the exercise of his sovereign power, led him to choose the posterity of Jacob rather than the posterity of Esau, that upon earth they should become his peculiar people, and be made the depositaries and preservers of the true religion." (p. 20.)

To this, as evolved into a regular system, Mr. Faber assigns no higher antiquity than Mr. Locke; and after a brief inquiry, concludes thus concerning it: "On the whole, for the general reception, or even for the bare existence of the scheme of Nationalism in the primitive church, as I understand that scheme to be developed by Mr. Locke, I am unable

ficabitur in conspectu suo quispiam vivens, sed omnis vivens: id est, non justificabuntur omnes, justificabuntur vero aliqui."—*Jerome*, in Ephes. i. 4.

Thus, according to Chrysostom, God chooses his people as a charioteer does his horses, on account of their foreseen qualifications for his service, as if those qualifications originated in something else, independent of God's purpose. While, according to Jerome, the people of God are chosen in order to be rendered (non quum essemus, sed ut essemus) suitable for his holy service; all their qualifications being *results* of that choice in order to its holy fulfilment; not original and independent *causes* of that choice.

In making this observation on these two celebrated fathers, I would be understood as grounding it solely on the two above-cited passages. I do not pretend to deny, that counter passages might be found in their writings, seeming to place them respectively on the opposite sides.

to discover any evidence. What evidence we have is, in truth, hostile to it. Therefore, like the scheme of Arminianism, I conceive that it must be dismissed as a novelty, and thence (in the language of Tertullian) as an adulteration." (p. 29.)

(4.) Having dismissed all these, Mr. Faber proceeds to give his own view of what the primitive Christians taught. Who will question his right—or, to speak more properly, his duty—to exercise and express his private judgment on the teaching of antiquity? And who can claim, for the conclusion he comes to, any higher authority than his private judgment? I feel assured that Mr. Faber would be among the last to be guilty of the *petitio principii* of asserting that any of his brethren, in opposing *his view* of the teaching of the primitive church, were *therefore* opposing the voice of antiquity.

He says, (pp. 222, 223,) "As contradistinguished both from the doctrine of Calvinistic Election, from the more plausible doctrine of Arminian Election, and from the present (I believe) somewhat popular doctrine of National Election: the primitive Christians, anterior to the time of Augustine, held, in point of *ideality*, the doctrine of "An election of certain individuals out of all nations into the pale of the visible church: with the merciful purpose and intention, on God's part, that through faith and holiness they should attain to everlasting life; but (since the immediate notion of their election respected only an admission into the church, not an

admission into heaven) with a possibility, through their own perverseness, of their not making their calling and election sure, and of thus failing to obtain the conditionally promised reward."

That such teaching, as is here described, may be found in the extant writings of some of the primitive Christians, I feel no disposition to question: but that the statement here made, and elaborately made, contains an adequate description of all the teaching of the primitive Christians upon this subject, may, I hope, be questioned without any presumption.

I have already assigned some reasons, derived from the language of Mr. Faber's own chosen witnesses, for demurring against his conclusions, as an adequate exposition of their sentiments. And I have now to notice that Mr. Faber himself seems to feel that his conclusion does not embrace the whole subject.

Having referred to the Jewish people as a sample of what he calls ecclesiastical individual election, he perceived that there ecclesiasticalism became identified with nationalism, at least in its extent. Then be writes, (p. 292,) "Henceforth, ALL the descendants of Israel were severally elected into the Levitical Church, while the great mass of mankind was left in the darkness of pagan error: and the consequence was, that the title of God's chosen people became the property, not of a *few* Israelites only as contradistinguished from the main body of the Israelites,

but of *all* the Israelites collectively as contradistinguished from the great body of the Gentiles who had not been thus elected."

Doubtless the Jewish people collectively, that is, the whole nation, are again and again called the chosen people of God; and this is one undeniable scriptural application of the term election. *But it is not the only one.* Mr. Faber seems to have felt this, and betrays a consciousness of the disturbing force upon his theory, of the language of the Apostle, which separates Jews from Jews, and gives the title of an election of grace to a "few Israelites as contradistinguished from the main body of the Israelites." Instead, however, of recognising this inner and closer application of election, (equally apostolical with the other,) Mr. Faber endeavours to parry the intrusion by appending the following note:—

"This view of the matter, depending simply upon *facts*, is not at all affected by these passages, which justly distinguish, in regard to their *individual* state and character, between the holy and unholy of the *generically* elected house of Israel. With reference to God's general decree of election, all the Israelites *collectively* are, again and again, denominated *God's chosen people;* though *spiritually*, and with reference to *individual* character, as the Apostle assures us, and as common sense itself requires, *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly*, and *they are not all Israel which are of Israel.* (Rom. ii. 28; ix. 6.) Nevertheless, the *fact* still remains unimpeached, that the

whole house of Israel is designated by the title of *the chosen people of the Lord.*" (p. 292.)

This fact is not denied; but another is equally asserted: namely, that St. Paul does, what Mr. Faber seems determined not to do: he applies the terms elect and election, not only unto all the Israelites collectively as contradistinguished from the Gentiles, *but also* to a few Israelites only, as distinguished from the remainder of their own nation. Of course this latter application of the terms is in a different sense from the former. Mr. Faber recognises the difference between the house of Israel "generically," and certain individuals within that house considered "spiritually and with reference to individual character." Of this, he says, the Apostle assures us, and he adds, common sense itself requires it. It is of much importance, I think, to add further, that the Apostle plainly and pointedly calls those spiritual individuals "the election." He refers to a remarkable period in the history of the house of Israel—the days of Elias the prophet—when these spiritual individuals, not to be distinguished from those around them by men, not even by the inspired prophet, but known unto God, who had by his secret grace reserved them to himself; amounted to seven thousand. Then applying the reference to his own times, he says, "Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace . . . . What, then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but *the election* hath

obtained it, and *the rest* were blinded." (Rom. xi. 2—7.)

With this explanation, I can very cordially coincide in Mr. Faber's general conclusion, that "the view of election taken by the primitive christian church perfectly corresponds with the doctrine of election as exhibited in the Old Testament." (p. 293.) The doctrine of election, as exhibited in the Old Testament, is two-fold—first, a collective election to ecclesiastical privileges, including all the circumcised, as distinguished from the Gentiles; and secondly, an individual election to eternal life, including those whom God reserved to himself by special grace, as distinguished from the rest of the circumcised nation. To this corresponds the view of election taken by the Apostles, and by the primitive christian church—viz. first, a collective election to ecclesiastical privileges, including all the baptized as distinguished from the heathen; and secondly, an individual election to eternal life, including those whom God "hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to bring by Christ to everlasting salvation," as distinguished from the rest of the baptized nations.

Under the Old Testament, "all were not Israel who were of Israel." There were two Israels. The one—national and visible, including subdivisions of Pharisees and Sadducees, who differed in many things one from another, but were identical in this, that they were all separated openly and avowedly

from the Gentiles by the ordinance of circumcision.

The other—Individual and spiritual, not certainly distinguishable by men, but seen and known of God, who had in special grace circumcised their hearts, as well as their flesh.

Under the New Testament, all are not Christ's who are of Christendom. There are two churches.

The one—Collective and visible, including many subdivisions, who differ in many things one from another, but are identical in this; that they are all separated openly and avowedly from all the rest of mankind, by the ordinance of baptism. These are the churches of Christ visible and militant here on earth, and the aggregate of them all, at any one time, is the visible church catholic.

The other—Individual and spiritual, scattered among the baptized communities, not certainly distinguishable by men, but seen and known of God, who has, in spiritual grace, baptized their hearts, making them "new creatures" in Christ Jesus. This is the church of God in Christ; and the true ideal of its catholicity ranges not only throughout the aggregate of visible churches at any time, but also throughout the history of them all, at all times: from the distinction between Abel and Cain, till the separation between believer and unbeliever, at the second coming of the Son of man.

In the spiritual sense here referred to, which I hope has been satisfactorily shown to be one—not

the only one, but I think undeniably one—of its true scriptural senses, THE CHURCH signifies the special election of God out of all the churches: including in one aggregate, all the men, women, and children, from among all mankind, who have been and who shall be saved. These were all chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, or as Ignatius expressed it, "predestinated before the worlds to glory."

Concerning some of these St. Paul writes in language applicable to them all: for the body is one: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will." (Ephes. i. 3—5.)

Now what has the church catholic said upon these words? Anything to prevent our attempting to understand them as we would any other words, in the exercise of the intellectual and moral powers of our common nature, and the spiritual teaching of our common Christianity? If we must wait for an unanimous consent of the Fathers, and not presume to interpret Scripture but in accordance with that consent, we must render this, in common with other portions of the same word, practically useless; and

if we interpret in agreement with some Fathers, and in opposition to others, we must exercise our private judgment.

Clearly we must; and what then shall we say on the words before us? St. Paul, writing to the christian believers at Ephesus, expresses his thanksgivings to God for the spiritual blessings bestowed upon himself and his converts. Those blessings, he says, God had given them in Christ. And not content with this statement, he proceeds with the sublime announcement, that the blessings so given, were given in accordance with a design that it should be so; a design existing in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. The Apostle's statement is not merely that before the foundation of the world God designed to send his Son Jesus Christ into the world; this is true, as written by St. Peter, "Jesus Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot, was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world." (1 Pet. i. 19, 20.) But the statement now before us, is that God had chosen them—them, Paul the Jewish writer of the epistle, and the Christians at Ephesus, the Gentile receivers of the epistle, them as individuals—what other conceivable meaning can be fairly put upon US in this passage? When a man, writing to two or more friends or acquaintances, says US, who can he mean but himself and them? And as his language leaves no reasonable doubt as to the persons he intended, so also it is explicit as to the nature of the blessings designed

for them. He does not say that God had chosen them that they should hear his word; but that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. He does not say that God had predestinated them to the privilege of having the means of grace, but to the adoption of children.

The distinction here marked is deserving of the more careful attention, because the opponents of this doctrine, (viz. the election of individuals to salvation,) finding the words elect and election in frequent use by the sacred writers, and being of course compelled to assign *some* meaning to them; have endeavoured to show that the election so spoken of in the Scripture, is an election to religious privileges in the present life, not to eternal happiness in the next. In this sense the Jewish nation are admitted to have been the elect people of God, because to them were given religious privileges such as no other nation enjoyed. But when the Lord commanded his apostles to carry the Gospel to all nations, then the Gentiles also became the elect people of God, being called to the enjoyment of equal, or even superior religious privileges.

One of the most amiable of modern controversialists, whose name I cannot recal without affection, and to whose book (although compelled to differ from it) I cannot refer without respect, writes thus: "I am very far from denying that many passages of Scripture show that the supreme God, the moral Governor of the world, following the dictates of his

own free choice, and the counsels of his unfathomable wisdom, justice, and mercy; has conferred, and still confers, on different nations, or collective bodies of men, and consequently on the individuals of which they are composed, greater degrees of moral and religious advantages than those which he has conferred upon others; advantages which, if improved aright, are calculated to send the individuals possessed of them to higher exaltation in a future world than those who are not possessed of them; and in this sense each individual may truly be said to be *called* or *elected*, while others, to whom these advantages are not extended, may be said to be comparatively excluded or rejected; and as this admission or exclusion must take place according to the predetermination of God, and the final orders of his providential dispensations, they may be said to be predestined or decreed; but due attention to the doctrine of the Scripture on this subject will prove that the election implies no security of unconditional salvation to the elect." *

Then, having applied this principle to the Jews in their enjoyment of their peculiar distinctions, the writer adds, "True it is, the selection of any particular family for such a purpose must have been to them a gift of free unmerited grace, and to the rest of mankind must have exhibited the appearance of exclusion and comparative rejection; hence it sometimes is spoken of in terms easily misunderstood and mis-

* *Graves* on Predestination, pp. 280, 281.

interpreted; but this election referred to religious privileges in the present life, not to eternal happiness in the next." *

And again, "This extension to all nations of the privileges which the chosen people hitherto had almost exclusively enjoyed, combined with the rejection of the Jews for their obstinate incredulity, is dwelt on by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who was the most effective agent in this ministry, with singular emphasis, as a distinguished æra in the dispensations of providence, a wonderful and mysterious display of divine wisdom and energy, which those to whom this new calling and election was extended, should receive with the most prompt submission, and the most heartfelt gratitude." †

It would be easy to multiply citations from this and similar works, wherein this view of the subject is largely and elaborately defended; but enough has been transcribed to set it with fairness and candour before the minds of my readers.

I have no intention or wish to dispute the general statements contained in these quotations, or to deny that they express a scriptural truth; but I am compelled to feel that there is another truth revealed in Scripture which they do not express, but rather reject.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, inviting attention to a combined view of the dispensations of God, with especial reference to religious privileges, and passing,

* Ibid. p. 289. † Ibid. p. 312.

on the easy narrative of a parable, from what was history when he spoke, to what was then prophecy, but has since become history in the calling of the Gentiles; describes the called under a variety of characters both good and bad, and, instead of identifying the called with the elect, as the above quotations do, concludes his startling description of the final separation among them, with the well-known words, "For many are called, but few are chosen." All, to whom the servants carried the invitation, were called, and are described as guests among whom the king's servants were not competent accurately to distinguish; but the king himself distinguishes and orders one of the called to be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; and then he adds, "For many are called, but few are chosen."* How is this to be harmonised with the interpetration which limits the scriptural meaning of election to religious privileges in the present life, and denies its application to eternal happiness in the next?

All the called are chosen to religious privileges. This is not denied. But some among them are chosen to something more, or our Lord's distinction has no force of application.

If it be alleged that all the called were equally chosen at the time, but that some only availed themselves of their opportunities so as to improve them to salvation; while others so neglected them as to

* St. Matt. xxii. 1—14.

incur ruin; I answer, that to mark such a distinction as this, our Lord's words are inappropriate. Had this been his meaning, he should have said, for many are called and chosen, but few are saved: what he did say, however, was very different, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

On another occasion, when speaking of himself as the good shepherd, and the members of his church, his chosen ones, as his sheep, he said to the Jews who surrounded him, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." The persons so addressed were called to the enjoyment of religious privileges in the present life; they heard the words, and saw the works of the Son of God; yet they believed not, because they were not of his sheep. Thus a distinction is marked between some who were in the enjoyment of religious privileges, and his sheep. Whom, then, are we to understand by his sheep? He continued, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (St. John x. 24—30.) Surely these words were intended to express, concerning these persons, something more than their election to religious privileges in the pre-

sent life. Do they not, with a plainness difficult to be evaded, declare their eternal election by God the Father, who gave them to Jesus, and their eternal salvation by Jesus, who says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish?" If anything can add to the force of such language, it is the contrast between it and what he says at the same time to persons who were, equally with his sheep, in the enjoyment of religious privileges in this life, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

To the same purpose he said again to the Jews who possessed the Scriptures and other religious privileges, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* And in contrast with this, he said, "All that the Father giveth to me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."† And reiterating the remarkable truth of the Father's gift of some to him, as a thing essentially different from the possession of religious privileges, and as inseparably connected with widely different results, he said, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."‡ And again, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, as thou hast

* St. John v. 39, 40. † Ibid. vi. 37.

‡ Ibid. vi. 39.

given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life," (he says not to all who receive and implore religious privileges, but) " to as many as thou hast given him." *

To the Christians at Thessalonica, St. Paul addresses similar language. Distinguishing between the means of grace, and grace itself, he says, " Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." In word it had come to them in common with all their fellow-citizens: to many it had come in word only; but to them it had come not in word *only*, but also in power. The nature of the power is specified; it had come in the Holy Ghost. The effect of such power is described; it produced much assurance. And all this, connected with his conviction that the blessing so bestowed upon them was in pursuance of God's electing love towards them. " Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." (1 Thess. i. 4, 5.) In his second epistle to the same church he says, " We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation,† through sanctification of the

* St. John xvii. 1, 2.

† " God hath chosen you from the beginning, his election is sure for ever. The Lord knoweth who are his. You shall not be deceived by the power and subtlety of Antichrist; you shall not fall from grace; you shall not perish. This is the comfort which abideth with the faithful when they behold the fall of the

Spirit, and belief of the truth whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." * But all who were chosen to the hearing of the word, were not "chosen to salvation;" for to many the Gospel came "in word only," as distinguished from its saving power;† and concerning these we read, (Acts xvii. 1—8,) that instead of believing what they heard, and consorting with Paul and Silas, they abused to their own ruin the same religious privilege, by means of which the elect from among them were saved: they rejected and resisted the word, and stirred up a violent opposition against the Apostles.

wicked; when they see them forsake the truth, and delight in fables; when they see them return to their vomit, and wallow again in the mire."—*Bishop Jewell* of 2 Thess. in loco.

* 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

† "The words of the preacher enter in at the ear; the Spirit of God conveyeth them into the heart. Augustine saith, 'The Gospel is declared; some there are which believe; some there are which believe not: they which believe hear it inwardly by the Father, and so learn it; they which believe not, hear it only with their outward sense, and not with inward feeling, and therefore learn it not.' As much as to say, to them it is given to believe; to the other it is not given. In the Acts of the Apostles (xvi.) Lydia, a woman of the city of Thyatira, heard the preaching of the Apostle Paul, (but it is said) whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that Paul spake. The people which said unto Peter and the other Apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' did hear all the words of Peter; but they had another teacher, that gave force unto the word, and made it faithful to them, and therefore it is said, 'They were pricked in their hearts.'"—*Bishop Jewell*, 1 Thess. i. 5.

Among the Jews, God's chosen nation, who were all called to the special enjoyment of religious privileges in the present life, there was—as has been, I think, already proved—an election altogether distinct from the bulk of the nation; there was an Israel elect unto salvation, in the midst of an Israel elect unto religious privileges. All were not Israel in the one sense, who were of Israel in the other. It was so in the days of Elijah the prophet, when—amidst the idolatrous nation,—the remnant according to the election of grace, consisting of seven thousand men, were kept by the secret power of God from bowing the knee to the image of Baal. It was so in the days of St. Paul, when, on the eve of the apostacy of the nation, a remnant according to the election of grace, including the Apostles, the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost, and we know not how many more, were quickened from death unto life, and made the mustard-seed of the christian church. It was so among the Gentiles, where the Gospel was preached, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Thessalonica, at Rome, "Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed them not," and "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" and for as many as believed, the apostles gave thanks, because God had from the beginning chosen them to salvation.† It has continued so, and it is so to this day, in every

* Rom. ix. 6; and xi. 1—6. Acts xiii. 48; and xxxviii. 24.

† 2 Thess ii. 13.

place where the Gospel is preached. To some it comes in word only, and their characters and pursuits continue substantially what they were; to others (of the same family very often) it comes in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, and their characters and pursuits are altered. A separation is effected, and the Lord's prediction is fulfilled; "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division; for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three," &c. (St. Luke xii, 51—53.)

And thus it must continue, as long as the Scriptures continue to be truly descriptive of Christ's church, that is, until he shall "accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom."

The aggregate of the elect, from the first, and to the last inclusive, is the church of God in Christ. "The church," says Bishop Jewell, "heareth the voice of the shepherd; it will not follow a stranger, but flieth from him, for it knoweth not the voice of strangers. It is the pillar of the truth, the body, the fulness, and the spouse of Christ; it is the vine, the house, the city, and the kingdom of God; they which dwell in it are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone, in whom all the building coupled together, groweth into an holy temple

in the Lord. "This church Christ loved, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word, that he might make it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blame." (Ephes. v.) Such a church was the church of God at Thessalonica. Such a church are they, whosoever in any place of the world truly fear the Lord and call upon his name." *

This is a fruitful theme with the sacred writers, presented under a great variety of figures, while our Lord Jesus Christ himself is presented under corresponding figures. Thus, when we read of the vine and the branches, the bridegroom and the bride, the husband and the wife, the head and the body, the shepherd and the sheep; under all this variety of figurative language we are reading one and the same truth. That truth is the unchangeable relationship which exists according to the eternal purpose of God the Father, between Jesus Christ God manifest in the flesh, and the whole company of the elect, the faithful, the saints, the church, or by whatever other name those persons, considered in the aggregate, may be called, who are chosen of God in Christ out of mankind, and predestinated to everlasting salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth working by love.

Concerning this body, our reformers taught, and

* *Jewell* on 1 Thess. i. 1.

our church adopted, and we have subscribed, thus, "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length (by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity." (*Art.* xvii.)

In contemplating more closely and clearly the constituent parts of the church of God in Christ, it is necessary to distinguish between the purpose of God, as it exists in his mind, and the performances of God as they are progressively developed in his providence.

In the purpose of God there is no succession, no variableness or shadow of turning. All is perfect. All was always perfect. All that shall stand forth as perfected performance throughout eternity to come, is nothing more than a true and faithful echo or reflexion of what was perfectly purposed from eternity past. No new thing can arise; not a

movement of an insect or an atom. If the smallest fraction of any occurrence of any kind be unprovided for, it might happen to jostle against and disturb the whole framework. And therefore it has been well said, that if "anything be contingent, nothing can be certain." It follows irresistibly, that if anything be certain, nothing can be contingent with God. Jehovah can never in anything be surprised; "He is God, and there is none like him, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* (Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10.) Considered in the

* "All things which God in their times and seasons hath brought forth, were eternally and before all times in God, as a work unbegun is in the artificer who afterwards bringeth it unto effect. Therefore whatsoever we do behold now, in this present world, it was inwrapped within the bowels of divine mercy, written in the book of eternal wisdom, and held in the hands of omnipotent power, the first foundation of the world being as yet unlaid. So that all things which God hath made are in that respect the offspring of God; they are in him as effects in their highest cause; he likewise actually is in them, the assistance and influence of his deity is their life. Let hereunto saving efficacy be added, and it bringeth forth a special offspring amongst men, containing them to whom God hath himself given the generous and amiable name of sons. We are by nature the sons of Adam. When God created Adam, he created us; and as many as are descended from Adam, have in themselves the root out of which they spring. The sons of God we neither, are all, nor any one of us, otherwise than only by grace and favour. The sons of God have God's own Son, as a second Adam from heaven, whose

divine purpose, therefore, Christ and his church are perfect. He was set up in all his mystical fulness from eternity; and the union of each member in him, unto the accomplishment of them all, belongs to the self-same determinate counsel and fore-knowledge by which the Head was delivered into wicked hands, crucified, and raised again from the dead. (Acts ii. 23, 24.)

But in the performances of God among men, there is progress. These are imperfect, that is, unfinished; and being unrevealed in their details as

race and progeny they are by spiritual and heavenly birth. God, therefore, loving eternally his Son, he must needs eternally in him have loved and preferred before all others them which are since spiritually descended and spring out of him. These were in God, as in their Saviour, and not as in their Creator only. It was the purpose of his *saving* goodness, his *saving* wisdom, and his *saving* power, which inclined itself towards them. They which were thus in God eternally by their intended admission to life, have, by vocation or adoption, God actually now in them, as the artificer is in the work which his hand doth presently frame. Life, as all other gifts and benefits, groweth originally from the Father, and cometh not to us but by the Son; nor by the Son to any of us in particular, but through the Spirit. For this cause the Apostle wisheth to the church of Corinth the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Which three St. Peter comprehendeth in one, *the participation of the divine nature.* We are therefore in God, through Christ, eternally, according to that intent and purpose whereby we are chosen to be made his in this present world, before the world itself was made. We are in God, through the knowledge which is had of us, and the love which is borne towards us from everlasting."—*Hooker,* Eccl. Pol. b. v. sec. 56.

regards times and persons, they are invested with all the practical elements of uncertainty, and all the practical results of responsibility, to the mind and conduct of every man. The theory of them, however, in the aggregate, as far as the church of God in Christ is concerned, is revealed. And being revealed, it presents itself to every true Christian with all the unchangeable certainty which belongs to the great Revealer, the faithful and true God, who keepeth his promise for ever.

To have clear views of the constituent parts of the church of God in Christ, we must contemplate them with reference to this progress of God's performances among men, and this revealed promise that the progress shall not be interrupted till the purpose be completely performed. Thus viewed, the body of Christ may be said to consist of four distinct classes.

The first class consists of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, whose bodies have returned to dust, and whose spirits, the spirits of just men made perfect, being delivered from the burden of the flesh, are " present with the Lord" in joy and felicity. The second class consists of those on the earth, in all climes and nations, who are quickened into spiritual life by divine grace, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells and acts, who trust in Jesus, and walk with God, not by sight but by faith. These are what we understand by real Christians. The third class consists of those on the earth, in all climes and nations,

who are fore-ordained of God to be converted into real Christians at his appointed time, but who are not yet effectually called and quickened into spiritual life. These may be appropriately designated elect, though as yet sinners. At the time of Stephen's martyrdom, Saul of Tarsus belonged to this third class: he was a chosen vessel of grace, though as yet in point of fact an unconverted sinner. Afterwards, as he went to Damascus, he was transferred into the second class: he became a real Christian. The fourth class consists of those who are not yet born into this world, but are foreseen of God in the loins of their parents, or their parents' parents, and fore-ordained to be born, and in due time to be "born again."

These all, viewed in the aggregate, constitute the *catholicity* of the church of God, extending over all the ages of the world's history, and all the countries of the world's geography. This is the only true and genuine catholicity. There cannot be a more egregious misnomer than the application of that expression to a section of the whole, limited in its extent, and temporary in its duration. The church of God existed on earth, and members of it were translated to heaven during successive generations, for above four thousand years, before there was the name or thought of a church in either Italy or England." * And at this moment there are multitudes of members of it, who are utter strangers to both Rome

* This will be proved in the next chapter.

and Canterbury. How, then, can any one, with common regard to accuracy of language, apply the term "Catholic" to either the Latin or the English church? How, indeed, except in the way of accommodation to any church, or combination of churches, at any one time upon earth?"

In the way of accommodation it is commonly applied to the general society of those who at any one time profess the faith of Christ "throughout all the world." Thus Bishop Pearson* says, "The most obvious and most general notion of this catholicism consisteth in the *diffusiveness* of the Church." In this sense, it includes "all who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, (1 Cor. i. 2,) and therefore Greeks, Moravians, Waldenses, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Scots, and Americans, as well as Romans and Anglicans. Differences in proportions of numbers constitute no difference in principle; and while all these varieties exist in the general society of those who profess the faith of Christ, it is plainly an unwarrantable usurpation in any one of them, to arrogate a title which by implication absorbs all the rest. The Zuinglians said well in their Helvetic Confession, "There is only one church, which we therefore call catholic, because it is universal, and diffused through all parts of the world, and *extends to all times*, being included within no particular localities *or ages*. Therefore we condemn the Donatists, who re-

* On the Creed.

stricted the church to some corners of Africa; nor do we approve the Roman clergy, who vaunt of the Roman church alone as the catholic."* The former part of this passage, taken absolutely, to include *all ages* as well as all parts of the world, does indeed describe the genuine catholicity of the church of God, the body of Christ.

The Apostle Paul having declared the resurrection and exaltation of Christ by the power of God, adds, that God gave him (Christ) to be head over all things, to the church which is his body; and then, in an amplifying description of that body, he includes all the fore-ordained members thereof, from the first to the last, calling it "*the fulness* of him who filleth all in all;"† the fulness, mystically speaking, of him whose human nature is the head of the body, and who in his Godhead filleth all in all. Christ considered in the purpose of God is not alone. He is "the first-born of many brethren,"‡ the head of a body consisting of many members. The aggregate of these members constitutes the fulness of the whole body. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one

* "Consequitur unam duntaxat esse ecclesiam: quam propterea catholicam nuncupamus, quod sit universalis, et diffundatur per omnes mundi partes, et ad omnia se *tempora* extendat, nullis vel locis inclusa, vel temporibus. Damnamus ergo Donatistas, qui ecclesiam in nescio quos Africæ coarctabant angulos. Nec Romanensem approbamus clerum, qui solam prope Romanam ecclesiam venditant pro Catholica."—*Conf. Helvetica*, cap. xvii.

† Ephes. i. 23. ‡ Rom. viii. 29.

body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." (1 Cor. xii. 12.) So long as any of these members are absent, (not yet born, or not yet born again,) there remains a degree of emptiness about the body. Thus the church, in the sense here described, is the fulness of Christ. Neither is the head without the body, nor the body without the head; but the head and the body, Christ and the church of God in Christ, are one. The language of David in spirit concerning the members of his natural body, is the language of Christ concerning his church. "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." (Ps. cxxxix. 13—16.)

With a few observations of a more practical character on the figure here used by the Holy Ghost in the Apostle, I will conclude this chapter. The head of the natural body is the seat of *wisdom* and counsel, in compliance with the decisions of which the whole body is governed. Concerning the church, it is written, Jesus Christ is made unto us *wisdom*. It is his prerogative to decide for us in all things,

without any possibility of mistake, and without any possibility of appeal; and it is our high privilege to find obedience perfect freedom. This is the basis of much and precious experimental truth. He who is our Head for guidance, is also our Head for protection; and in his exaltation over *all things* for his church, we have the best assurance of that protection being all-sufficient. Our own treacherous hearts within; a tempting and ensnaring world without; the powers of darkness under their great leader Beelzebub, the chief of the devils, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour: all these things are against us. But over all things Jesus is supreme, and we are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

Again, in the natural body, the head is the receiver of appropriate *food*, and the communicator of strength, and nourishment, and increase thereby, to all the members. And concerning the church it is written, that from Jesus Christ the Head, "all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Or, as is elsewhere expressed by the same Apostle, "from him which is the Head, even Christ, the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." The nourishment ministered is the Holy Spirit. Our great Head, having led captivity

captive, is exalted in our nature to the right-hand of the Father, and has received gifts for men, that the Lord God, the Holy Ghost, may dwell among us. The Spirit thus received without measure into Christ, overflows like the ointment upon the head, even Aaron's head, diffuses itself amongst the members, joining, compacting, supplying, and effectually working in the measure of every part, unto the power and increase of life and godliness which is in love. Here also personal experience is our holy privilege: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." * But how so? There is no *natural* similitude between unity amongst brethren, and the flowing down of ointment from the head upon the members. The similitude does not lie in the natural image, but in the combination of the type of the High Priest, and the doctrine now before us. Unity amongst brethren, in the sense of the Psalmist, is given and maintained by the Holy Ghost, and by him alone. Aaron stood a type of the whole body of Christ: his head representing Christ, and his garments to their skirts representing the members of Christ. The precious ointment was a type of the unction of the Holy Ghost, by the penetrating, softening, en-

* Ps. cxxxiii.

lightening, and sanctifying energy of which the brethren dwell together in unity.

Behold how good, and O! taste how pleasant, how unspeakable and full of glory is the joy of putting on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, endeavouring to keep *the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace.

Again; in the natural body, the head responds in quick instinctive sympathy to the enjoyment or the suffering of any, or every member. When acute pain in any member or members forces a cry from the body, it is the head that gives utterance. Concerning the church, Jesus said, Inasmuch as ye have done it (shewn kindness, or the contrary) to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto ME. And on one remarkable occasion, when a few of the members were persecuted unto bitter endurance by the frantic, misguided zeal of Saul of Tarsus, the Head gave utterance to their cry, and in the touching oneness of genuine sympathy, said, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?

This leads us to consider the unity of the church of God in Christ.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST.—ITS UNITY.

Uniformity not essential to unity— Our present position—Archdeacon Hare quoted—In what true unity consists—Mr. Palmer's statement examined—Old Testament believers, though differing in ordinances, included in the unity of the Church—St. Luke x. 23, 24, *no objection—Nor St Matt.* xi. 11—*One Spirit—No entrance into the Church but by him—External nature opens no door—Christ is the only door—No entrance through Christ but by the one Spirit—No gift of the Spirit but by Christ—Yet the Spirit was given and members of the Church saved for* 4000 *years before Christ came—True unity thus proved to be inclusive of much diversity—Among those who so differ, mutual recognition as Christians a duty—Co-operation an impossibility.*

GREAT and manifold are the lamentations uttered by good and pious men over the existing divisions in the church of God; and earnest are their longings after unity. It may, however, be fairly questioned whether much that is complained of as division be really division: and whether much that is longed for as unity be indeed essential to unity. For in

what—let it be asked, and let it be thoughtfully and carefully answered, in what—consists the true unity of the christian church?

Is it that all who profess and call themselves Christians should pray in the same language, thus reversing the great miracle of Pentecost? Or is it that they all should worship in the same forms; all their ministers wearing the same dresses, and using the same postures? Or is it that while reverently obedient in observing the outward ordinances of Christianity instituted by the Lord, they should all ascribe exactly the same kind and the same degree of efficacy to those ordinances? Or is it that they should all interpret exactly in the same way, those intimations of Scripture and those records of antiquity which describe church government and discipline?

If uniformity in these things, and such as these, be indeed essential to christian unity, then, it must be confessed that great are our divisions; and it must be confessed further, by all who will take the trouble to think, that a remedy is utterly hopeless. Uniformity in such things is amongst the absolute *impossibilia*. Human nature recoils from it. Christianity nowhere enjoins it. The authority which enjoins and then proceeds to enforce it, is at once ante-human and ante-christian. Such authority is first the originator of separations, and then the punisher of one or more of the separating bodies.

But if christian unity consist in the relation which

every member bears to Jesus Christ, the Head; and the affection which they all should bear and manifest to one another; if it be a "unity of the spirit," as the Apostle calls it, (Ephes. iv. 3,) and if its "bond of peace" be a bond not of universal sameness, but of mutual forbearance; then, although our position is not what we could wish, it is far from being so deplorable as many imagine, and there is some hope of successful amendment.

The question is obviously one of primary importance: in what consists the true unity of the christian church? Is external uniformity indispensable towards it?

Within our own national church there has arisen of late, or rather perhaps it would be more correct to say, that circumstances have lately elicited, a strong expression of, a craving after external uniformity, extending to the most minute particulars connected with christian worship. The letter of the rubrical directions in our Book of Common Prayer is cited, as if there could be but one mode of understanding it. The terms of our subscription are reiterated as if one only view of them were consistent with common honesty; and rigid uniformity with *that* view is proclaimed to be so essential; that to those who differ from it, the name of true churchman is denied, and participation in our common Christianity is scarcely conceded.

Such language on one side is unfortunately, though too naturally, resented by parallel intem-

perance of denunciation and exclusion on the other side.

How then can there be agreement? Ordinary men, on either side, wish, each to have his own way imposed upon others. Each laments our divisions very feelingly, and warmly expresses his love of, and desire for, unity: and in the simplicity of his heart thinks it easy, since nothing more is necessary for the attainment of this millennium of agreement than that every one should adopt *his* view of things, which of course he conscientiously believes to be the best. Unfortunately, however, his neighbour is equally conscientious in himself, and equally inconsiderate of the feelings of others, and *his* aspirations after unity all go forth in a very different direction. These forces are simply and interminably antagonistic.

Superior men on either side, men of large and loving hearts, who desire to yield their own way and sacrifice their own preferences, for the sake of brotherly union and consequent christian influence, are powerless here. Even their genuine charity is neutralised by the adverse elements which now surround them. They cannot take a step calculated to win those on the one side, without finding that in so doing they have—though wholly unintentionally —offended and alienated those on the other side. They cannot aim at enlarging their christian influence on the right, without finding that in the act they have abridged that influence on the left. They

cannot co-operate with Dissenters—though for a high christian purpose and with truly christian men—without seriously widening the gulph which separates them from their High Church brethren. And they cannot recognise the truth and importance of church authority and church order, without incurring from Dissenters, and some others, the charge of semi-popery, or worse. They are in a strait: anxious for union, and willing to yield their own preferences both ways; but finding that even self-sacrifice, instead of joining the wall, widens both breaches.

What can be done to abate this evil, and introduce harmony? Is not the conviction forced upon every reflecting mind, that so long as it is taken for granted—as it seems at present very generally to be—that external uniformity is indispensable, nothing can be done?

Were our country differently circumstanced politically, power might interpose and enforce uniformity. But what then? The pressure of the tyrant, and the prostration of the slave, are not the elements of christian unity: a uniformity so introduced would embrace everything except what was Christian. True Christianity would escape from it by the avenues of exile and martyrdom.

The question recurs, What can be done? Is external uniformity indispensable? If not, there may still be hope. With unfeigned diffidence, yet with the honest frankness of matured conviction, it is here

suggested that the idea of external uniformity being indispensable should be dismissed by all parties, and for ever. This asks no triumph for either party over the other. This does not require of either to give up even their personal preferences. Though we might ask, and from real Christians expect, mutual self-sacrifice, all we here ask is mutual forbearance. And all we ask from those in authority over us in matters ecclesiastical, is, that they should declare with authority—authority as generally and simultaneously expressed as is practicable under their circumstances—*the lawfulness of diversities* in external matters.*

This would indeed be a healing step. This would put an end to accusations and recriminations. And it is not going too far to say that there can be no healing in any other way than this, because in no other way can the real seat of the disease be reached. Everything short of this is but palliation. The

* The heavenly-minded Archbishop Leighton said, "Perfect and universal consent in all, after all industry bestowed on it, for anything we know, is not here attainable, neither betwixt all churches, nor all persons in one and the same church; and therefore, though Church meetings and synods, as the fittest and most effectual way to this unity, should endeavour to bring the Church to the fullest agreement that may be, yet they should beware lest the straining it too high in all things, rather break it, and an over diligence in appointing uniformities, remove them farther from it. *Leaving a latitude and indifferency in things capable of it, is often a stronger preserver of peace and unity.*"—*Commentary on* 1 *Pet.* iii. 8.

most approved mode of palliation at present seems to be to do nothing and say nothing upon the subject. This of course cannot be relied on. Men will speak, and the sore will and must be more and more probed and exhibited. Nothing that deserves the name of real healing can be accomplished, till men shall arise with courage to dare, and with power to accomplish, and with wisdom to give a true christian direction to their courage and their power, in a thorough remodelling, if not a total removal, of the real delinquent, the prolific source of our divisions—the Act of Uniformity.

I am aware of the necessity of *some* rule for the maintenance of "decency and order;" but surely when the nature of that necessity and of the great end in view are fairly considered, the rule should be prescribed with the elastic tenderness of a nurse who takes into account the varying temperaments and dispositions of the children: and not with the rigid recklessness of an imperious taskmaster, who would prostrate into a Procrustes bed all the varieties of human feeling and human conscience: cutting short to its own arbitrary standard all the outgoings, musical, architectural, and otherwise decorative, of a devotional imagination; and torturing out to meet the same standard all the simplicity of that abstract spirituality of mind which unfeignedly shrinks from decorations in religion, as from the precincts of an idolatrous temple.

With unfeigned admiration, I transcribe the fol-

lowing passages from a pamphlet which cannot, I think, be too widely circulated, or too carefully perused.*

After an instructive reference to the uniformalism of Archbishop Laud, and its genuine results, Archdeacon Hare proceeds, (p. 32): "The Church was overthrown, and her fall was hastened, to say the least, by the stubborn policy of her primate; as it was mainly occasioned from the first by her narrow-minded love of uniformity. As one proof how the very attempt to compress men's minds makes them fly asunder in all directions, I will cite a few words from Sanderson's Visitation Sermon in 1641: 'I cannot dissemble my fear that it is but too true, by the proportion of what we almost daily hear, or see, that, within the little more than this one twelve-month last past, there have been more false and superstitious doctrines vented in the pulpits and presses of England, than have been, in so open and daring a manner, in the whole space of almost four-score years before,—I mean, since the first of Queen Elizabeth of blessed memory.'

"This was the immediate effect of the futile attempt to repress such opinions by force. In order hat the fiery spirits thus kindled should burn themselves out, the monarchy and the Church of England were swept away; and a free licence and scope were granted to all manner of opinions by Cromwell. Hereby men were taught 'to feel the weight of too

* *The Unity of the Church.* By Archdeacon Hare.

much liberty,' and to long for what they had lost,—for the ancient government, for the Liturgy, for the Church. At the same time, the King's Declaration of October, 1660, one of the wisest state-papers ever issued, laid down principles, which, if they had been acted upon in a candid, conscientious, peace-loving spirit, would have done much for the pacification of our Church, and would have raised it to a power, and dignity, and efficiency, far beyond what it ever has, or seems ever likely to attain.

"A strange voice passed through England, a voice which spake of unity; but it was soon stifled by the tumultuous cries of opposite parties clamouring in rivalry for uniformity. And ere long all hope was blasted by that second, most disastrous, most tyrannical, and schismatical Act of Uniformity; the authors of which, it is plain, were not seeking unity but division. With evident design its provisions were made so stringent, the declaration required by it was worded with such exactive precision, that it was scarcely possible for an honest Presbyterian to make it: here and there one, whose habits of thought and temper had preserved him from strong opinions, might; but for the great body no alternative remained, except to belie their conscience, or to cut themselves off from the national church; and one can hardly doubt that this must have been the purpose of the framers of the Act. The excuses which may be urged for the first Act" —under Queen Elizabeth—"have no place here:

and though it is often pleaded in palliation of political parties, that their measures have been taken under the exasperation of suffering, and the intoxication of victory, this would be a sorry apology for the conduct of an ecclesiastical government. No question could now be entertained about the prevalence and permanence of the scruples, which it was resolved to set at nought: they had been handed down for three generations, and had become more and more widely diffused, not among the rabble, but among men of exemplary holiness and zeal. Yet, with a full knowledge of all this, it was required that every minister, not only such as might be ordained thenceforward, but all who at that time had any benefice or promotion, should solemnly declare their 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer.' This was enjoined, it is stated, 'to the end that uniformity in the public worship of God—which is so much desired—might be speedily effected.' The previous canonical declaration, that the Prayer Book 'contained nothing contrary to the word of God,' was hardly more than was implied in the engagement to make use of the Prayer Book in public worship. But this strait-waistcoat for men's consciences* could scarcely have been devised ex-

* There is a wide difference between disapproving of this Declaration ourselves, and disapproving of its enforcement upon others. It is not because of any personal repugnance to it that we deprecate its enforcement. In fact, it exercises no force upon

cept by persons themselves of seared consciences and hard hearts, by persons ready to gulp down any oath, without scruple about more or less. Verily, when I think of that calamitous and unprincipled act,—of the men by whom it was enacted, Charles the Second and the aristocracy and gentry of his reign,—of the holy men against whom it was enacted,—it seems almost like a prologue to the profligacy and infidelity which followed closely upon it. But what were its direst effects with regard to the unity of the church? It bore the name of uniformity on its forehead: can there have been any who persuaded themselves that a uniformity so enforced could be a means to unity! The only unity that could have ensued from it would have been that of a dead level: and full of woe as have been the consequences of this Act in its failure, they would have been still more terrible had it succeeded. Therefore even we, who love and revere our national church above every earthly institution, may bless God that it did not succeed. We may bless God for that he has given such grace and power to weak, frail, human hearts, that meek and humble men, where strengthened by his Spirit, are not to be driven out of the path in which their conscience commands

us; we make it with perfect freedom, so far as our own individual feelings are concerned. But others, and truly devoted Christians, cannot view it as we do, and we most highly disapprove of compelling such men either to submit to it with wounded consciences and injured self-respect, or to separate themselves from the national church.

them to walk, by the leagued forces of king and parliament and convocation, by the severest penal enactments, or even by the bitter pang of having to leave their loved flocks. Yes, we may join in giving God thanks for the work he has wrought in such men—for they are the true salt of the earth—even though we may deem that there was much of error in their judgments and opinions, almost as much as in our own. Yet how grievous was the wound to the church at the time! how grievous is it still at this day in its enduring effects! Some two thousand ministers, comprising the chief part, it seems scarcely questionable, of the most faithful and zealous in the land, were silenced in one day, were severed in one day from their flocks, were cast in one day out of our church, for the sake of maintaining uniformity. On that our English Bartholomew's day, the eye wandered over England, and in every fifth parish saw the people scattered abroad as sheep that had no shepherd. From that day do we date the origin of that constituted dissent and schism which is the peculiar opprobrium and calamity of our church, by which, in almost every parish, we find ourselves grievously crippled in our efforts to build up our people into a holy temple acceptable to the Lord; and which, in this very year, by its frantic uproar, is rendering it impossible for our legislature to take any efficient step toward the moral and religious education of the people,* although the dis-

* This was written in 1843, when the educational clauses of

closure of the frightful condition of huge masses of our population seemed for a moment to have allayed the contentions of political parties. So terribly is the sin of our forefathers, who formed the Act of Uniformity, visited upon England at this day; nor can any human foresight discern either how or when these evils are likely to terminate."

* * * *

"Are all such men to be debarred at once from the ministry of the church, because they entertain conscientious scruples on certain points acknowledged to be indifferent? The Act of Uniformity says, *Yes:* the spirit of true catholic Christianity says, *No.* The church that does so exclude them maims herself by forfeiting the services of numbers who would have served her faithfully; many of these, feeling an inward call to the ministry, which they cannot follow within the pale of the church,

the Factory Bill were so violently opposed by the Dissenters, because of the influence they were calculated to give to the clergy of the Established Church. The extent and eagerness of that opposition may be, in some degree, estimated, by comparing it with the more recent demonstration against the endowment of the Romish College of Maynooth. The former movement was exclusively of Dissenters; the latter was mixed, many and zealous Churchmen having joined in it; yet it appears by the Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, that there were presented to the House of Commons—

In 1845, against falsehood, by both Churchmen and Dissenters, 10,235 petitions, with 1,287,136 signatures.

In 1843, against the Church of England, by Dissenters alone, 13,369 petitions, with 2,068,059 signatures.

join the ranks of schism; and while the Act of Uniformity thus casts out many of the best fish from the net, all the bad, all the careless, all the unscrupulous, all the unprincipled, may abide in it unmolested."

* * * *

"I do not mean that the Nonconformists ought to have been allowed to remodel the Prayer Book at will, or to expunge or alter any parts of it that were dear to the rest of the church. But how easy would it have been to have introduced a few more double forms, leaving it to the discretion of the minister to choose which he preferred! In fact, this very course, which otherwise would doubtless be branded as a device of modern liberalism, is pointed out explicitly in the King's Declaration above referred to."*

I make no apology for these lengthened extracts. I find it difficult to give adequate expression to the intensity of my agreement with them. The last passage I have transcribed is similar in spirit, and the suggestion contained in it would, if acted upon, be similar in practice, to the proposition which I ventured to make on another occasion in the following terms:—

"To apply a remedy here, to minister to this secret tremor, so as to remove its cause, and give steadied confidence to our friends in their several advocacies of our general system—this would be to

* Pp. 32—41.

strengthen beyond calculation the forces of the church. I am tremblingly alive to the delicacy of the ground on which I have now ventured to tread. I have surveyed the hosts of armed opponents, ready on every side to be roused to active hostilities by the slightest attempt at the addition, omission, or alteration of even a single word in our venerated ritual. I am thoroughly convinced that at this moment no proposal, even of inspired wisdom, if we could have it, would secure unanimity of adoption, and give entire satisfaction to all parties. Nevertheless, strong in the confidence of honest attachment, deeply feeling the necessity of some movement in this matter, if we are to be prepared for the gathering conflict, and believing that true christian love, however it may cause momentary pain, can never give to christian brethren permanent offence, I will suggest what has occurred to me, and scatter it from this place as a seed, either to fructify or to decay, as seemeth best to our heavenly Father. The suggestion which I venture to make has this advantage, that it would not erase a word, nor add a word, nor alter a word, in any of our services; and yet, if introduced by the proper and competent authorities, it would gladden many a heart that trembles, and strengthen many a hand that hangs down, among conscientious and devoted churchmen.

"It is simply this: that the passages referred to, as they stand in our services, be placed by authority

between brackets, and the clergy authorised to read, or not to read, those bracketed clauses, according to their varying judgment and convictions. The consequence would be, that no change at all would take place in the practice of some of the clergy. They would read on all occasions, as they do now, the entire service as it stands. Others would avail themselves of the conceded option, and omit the bracketed passages, or some of them. And many, perhaps, would read, or not read, the passages in question, according to the circumstances of the particular case. Neither would our uniformity sustain any serious injury thereby. Already we are in the practice of quite as great an amount of deviation from rigid uniformity, grounded upon a similar liberty of choice. Of the opening sentences of our public service, the officiating minister may read only one, and any one he pleases, out of eleven, or he may read all the eleven, or any varying portion of the eleven, according to his preference on any particular occasion. Also there are certain collects which may or may not be added, in reading the accustomed service, at the option of the clergyman; or, as the Rubric expresses it, 'The same may be said also as often as occasion shall serve after the collects, either of morning or evening prayer, communion, or litany, by the discretion of the minister.'

"In point of fact, varieties do now occur in the reading of our services, at different times, and by different ministers, to the extent of the introduction

or omission of whole sentences, nay, of entire prayers, and no want of uniformity is felt. So it would be in the case now suggested. No congregation would be in the least degree disturbed; no clergyman, who prefers the entire services as they now stand, would be deprived of one valued expression; while many would be relieved by the option, and a vast accession of cordiality in support from the religious laity would be gained, by the testimony thus borne to the difference between prescribing as indispensable, and suggesting as preferable." *

I am increasingly impressed with the absolute necessity of *some* movement in this direction for the preservation of our church. I fear none will be made. Dread of alteration is as intense as it could be—and as it ought to be—if all our ritual in its most minute details, were of express divine appointment. While for the sake of details of human origin, and of at least questionable wisdom, we are involved in a continued violation, towards many christian brethren, of that loving forbearance which is indeed of divine appointment.

" I know," says Achdeacon Hare, " that they who desire to act in the manner here recommended, are sure to be met with those stupid and mischievous saws, that one concession brings on another, and that, when you have once begun to give way and to change, you can never tell where you will be able

* *Lectures on the Church of England*, 1840. Eighth Edit. pp. 258, 259.

to stop. Harmless as these sayings may seem in their utter fatuity, it is difficult to estimate the mass of injury they have done to mankind. By means of them, pride, and indolence, and obstinacy, have bolstered themselves up in their favourite inertness, gaining the too ready concurrence of the timid and feeble-minded good. Nor have these sayings, when listened to, ever failed to justify themselves. For they withhold men from conceding, until the concession is extorted from them, and then it is yielded grudgingly, reluctantly; it does not come as an act of grace, and thus carries no grace to the receivers, who, initiated by long contention, and having learned their own strength from the constraint they have exercised over their adversaries, have been prepared to crave for more, and emboldened to insist upon it. Surely a wise man will say, *If a concession ought to be made, let me make it forthwith, and thus gain that only real strength which arises from being in the right. Then, should a concession which ought not to be made, be demanded of me, the very strength accruing to me from this act will better enable me to refuse it.* O that people could be brought to believe that right is always might, and that wrong is always weakness!" *

All this is of course written under the conviction that external uniformity is nowhere enjoined by divine authority; or, in other words, is nowhere commanded in holy Scripture. The nature of the unity

* Pp. 43, 44.

therein described and enjoined is of a very different character. It consists

1. In the relation which every true Christian bears to the Lord Jesus Christ, and

2. In the affection which they all reciprocate amongst each other.

The relation is perfect. The affection is imperfect. In the former they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," * In the latter, they are "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." †

Considered in their relation to Christ, there is one body. The Apostle does not say there ought to be, but there is, one body. The Head is one: so distinctly so, so immeasurably separated from all others, that on that point there can be no mistake. And as the Head, so also the body is one; and there are no divisions, and can be no divisions. The analogy with a natural body is pursued by the Apostle. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, *are one body;* so also is Christ." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.)

Christian unity, in this its first and highest sense, does not present itself in the aspect of a duty for us to perform, or endeavour to perform; it is a revealed fact for us to believe. This is the truth which we have just considered, in the preceding

* 1 Pet. i. 5. † Eph. iv. 3.

chapter. The body of Christ is one in the eternal purpose of God, which includes every member "of his flesh and of his bones," and "not a bone of him can be broken." (Eph. v. 20. Compare Exod xii. 46, with 1 Cor. v. 7, and St. John xix. 36.)

It is on the strength of this oneness in their relation to Christ, which cannot be broken, that the Apostle expostulates with the Corinthian Christians against breaches of affection and harmony among one another. (1 Cor. i. 11—13.) There were contentions among them, one saying, I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollos, upon which the Apostle exclaims, Is Christ divided? As if he had said, Why should there be divisions among you in any respect, seeing that in the highest of all respects ye are one; one in Christ? Is Christ divided? Are you divided as touching your relation to Christ? Certainly not. Then since you are one in him—of this there can be no question—be ye harmonious among one another.

In this second aspect of christian duty, where it consists in the affection which all true believers in Christ ought to bear and manifest one towards another, it does present itself as a duty, and we are plainly instructed in Eph. iv. 2, 3, how to aim at the successful discharge of it. If we would walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, as members of Christ's body, it must be in the practical remembrance that each has its own appro-

priate function, and that each being imperfect in himself, and requiring forbearance from others, should be also lowly in his own eyes, and ready in the practice of forbearance. This is the way, " With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Was the Act of Uniformity an exercise of meekness and long suffering, forbearance in love? Or was it not rather an exercise of coercive tyranny? Instead, therefore, of being in harmony with the apostolical instructions for the preservation, if possible, of the unity of the Spirit, it was an act of reckless rebellion, in defiance of those instructions, and well calculated to engender strifes and divisions.

On this point, we have further the instructive example of apostolical legislation. The Jewish converts to the Gospel in the infancy of the christian church, clamoured for external uniformity, and insisted on all their customs being imposed on the converted Gentiles. The Gentiles clamoured for uniformity, and insisted on their liberty from such customs being adopted by the Jews. The Jew, who observed days and meats with rigid exactness, despised the Gentile converts as licentious in the neglect of such observances. The Gentile, who looked more exclusively to the spiritual nature of the christian religion, judged or condemned the Jewish brethren as superstitious.

Then what course did the Apostle adopt? Did he, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, pronounce an act of uniformity, and command a sameness of practice? No; emphatically no. He proclaimed *the lawfulness of diversities!* in external matters. He said, "One believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak eateth herbs. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike." Then to settle such differences, he said, first as to personal sincerity, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;" and then as to relative forbearance, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not: and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. (Rom. xiv. 1—19.)

Is external uniformity, then, essential to christian unity? I rejoice to think that assuredly it is not. Though in coming to this conclusion I am compelled to resist the well-intended, but, as I feel convinced, disastrous attempts made, and in our own days repeated, to represent external uniformity as indispensable.

Mr. Palmer, in his "Treatise on the Church," announces his design to prove "that external visible

communion between all Christians, in matters of religion, was instituted and commanded by God.'' (Vol. i. p. 46.) His promised proof, however, turns out to be no more than an inference. He says, "The general duty of religious communion among Christians is to be *inferred* from their mutual relations, from the duty of charity enjoined by Christ and the Apostles, from the practice of the church instituted by them; and, finally, from universal tradition, and the general consent of professing Christians." (p. 47.) On the first of these heads he writes thus; "All Christians are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, who is the first-born among many *brethren.* As brethren they are bound to all the duties of the fraternal relation in religion; and this necessarily infers a visible communion and amicable intercourse in religious matters. Christ is described in Scripture as "the head of the body, the church;" and Christians are "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." This implies the very closest ties and strongest mutual interest between all Christians, and therefore, as a necessary consequence, their *external* communion." (p. 47.)

It is against what is here called a necessary consequence, that I feel compelled to demur. It is doubtless a fair and legitimate inference from their relation as brethren, that all Christians should maintain amicable intercourse; but the force of the further inference, that they should therefore main-

tain a unity, or even a similarity in *externals*, may fairly be questioned. That brethren should *love* one another requires no proof; but there appears no cogency in the inference that therefore they should be *like* one another. The just inference seems rather to be, that, although differing in many things, as brethren both in nature and in the church do and always have done, yet their sincere love and amicable intercourse ought to survive such differences. Their features, their complexions, their statures, their gaits, may differ exceedingly, yet their brotherly love should continue. An attempt in nature to make *external* unity a necessary consequence of the fraternal relation, would in every family prove abortive; and a similar attempt in the family of the church of God has led to breaches and estrangement, such as need never have been, had the proper allowance been always made for diversity of externals among brethren, the sons of one mother.

As Mr. Palmer advances, he is forced to feel the inconvenience of his own inference, and driven to what appears inconsistent with his statement already quoted. Romanist writers adopting the same inference, have pushed it forward into consequences such as Mr. Palmer can by no means assent to. They absolutely deny the possibility of the catholic church itself ever being divided in respect of external communion. Mr. Palmer, on the contrary, desires to show that it may be, and in answer to their arguments, which are but an extension of his

own first inference, he writes, "If the essential unity of the church is to be inferred from its being spoken of in the singular number, as the 'kingdom,' 'household,' 'body,' and 'spouse' of Christ, it is probably to be understood of a *spiritual unity of relations to Christ, which might exist, even if external unity were interrupted.*" (p. 74.) Exactly so; and the confusion arises from attempting to apply to visible communities among men what is written in the Scriptures concerning the church of God in Christ.

Mr. Palmer adds, "The field," the "draw-net,' and "the threshing-floor," prefigure the church as *one;* that is, as the common and only way of trial and salvation. The same may be said of the types of the terrestrial paradise, the ark of Noah, the temple of Jerusalem, &c., which are said to prefigure the church's unity. They all relate to salvation in the church only; but they do not enable us to determine whether that church was always to be perfectly united in *external* communion." (Ibid.)

The history of the church of God, as detailed in the Scripture, enables us to determine that it has not been united in external communion. The external ordinances enjoined by God himself upon his church at different periods, have varied exceedingly, without any interference with the enduring unity of the church. And in the apostolical period, various diversities as to external observance are distinctly sanctioned, while the brethren are exhorted not to

allow such diversities to interrupt their fraternal affection and amicable intercourse. Comparing the different periods of the church's history, some members were circumcised, some were baptized, some both, some neither. But in the true unity of the church of God, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." (Gal. v. 6.) Abel had faith; he was righteous by faith; by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. (Heb. xi. 4.) Abel was a member of the church of God in Christ, and Abel had neither circumcision nor baptism. David had faith, and was a member of the church of God in Christ, and David had circumcision but not baptism. Paul was a member of the church of God in Christ, and Paul had both circumcision and baptism. The faithful brethren at Ephesus were members of the "one body," the church of God in Christ, and they had baptism, but not circumcision. And the Apostle, recognising the unbroken unity of the church, as wholly unaffected by this diversity even in her great initiatory ordinance, repeats that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. iv. 15.)

It will not, I presume, be denied that the distinguishing blessing of the church of God in Christ, that which constitutes its essential peculiarity in contrast with everything else, was bestowed upon Abraham and David, as fully as upon Paul or John.

So clearly and strikingly was this the case, that it is by reference to the histories and language of these men that the Apostle illustrates his sublime argument on the subject of "righteousness imputed without works." (Rom. iv.) The Gospel was preached to Abraham. (Gal. iii. 8.) Abraham beheld the day of Christ, and was glad. (St. John viii. 56.) It is the blessing of Abraham that is come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. (Gal. iii. 14.) "So then they which be of faith, are blessed *with* faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 9) in one body. The tree of the church of God in Christ is one. Gentile branches, being graffed in, become *partakers* of the root and fatness of the one olive tree. (Rom. xi. 17.) The city of the church of God in Christ is one, and the household is one. Gentile citizens being admitted, become thereupon *fellow*-citizens with the ancient saints, and of the one household of God. (Eph. ii. 19.) The temple of the church of God in Christ is one. Its foundation is the foundation of the Apostles and prophets; and other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, namely, Jesus Christ. In him all the one building groweth unto one holy temple, and to the Gentiles who believed, the Apostles say, "Ye *also*, as lively stones, are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Pet. ii. 5.) This is the mystery which for many ages was not made known, but is now revealed, "That the Gentiles should be *fellow*-heirs and of *the same*

body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." (Eph. iii. 5, 6.) The fold also of the church of God in Christ is one, and that one fold is undeniably inclusive of both Jew and Gentile. For Jesus, addressing Jewish members of that fold, said, " Other sheep I have, which are not"—as yet—" of this fold—αὐλῆς; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold"—or flock, ποίμνη—including both you and them—" and one shepherd." (St. John x. 16.)

Distinctions are indeed recognised in Scripture between the condition of a believer in God's promises prior to the incarnation of the eternal Word, and that of a true Christian since the day of Pentecost. But they are not such as to interfere with the unity of the church.

To the New Testament believers it was said by the Lord, " Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (St. Luke x. 23, 24.)

From this an essential inferiority in the condition of the Old Testament saints has been concluded, and thereupon their unity in the church of Christ with the saints under the New Testament denied.

The words, however, prove nothing more than a difference in the degrees of clearness with which the things connected with the personal ministry of

the Messiah were seen by those who looked forward on the strength of the divine promise, desiring to see them; and those who stood present actually beholding them. It is to be observed that the things themselves were the same. The difference between the parties was not that they saw or desired different things, but that the one actually saw the same things which the others desired to see. Such a difference extends to nothing fundamental, and involves nothing to interfere in the slightest degree with the essential unity of both in one body. If differing degrees of knowledge concerning the same great truths disturb the unity of the church, it is obvious that the claim to unity must be wholly and for ever relinquished, in whatever sense the church may be understood: for concerning what body of men, in any age, or under any circumstances, could it be predicated with truth that a part of the unity subsisting among them was an identity in their degrees of knowledge? Certainly never concerning any baptized community upon earth. If, then, unity be claimed for the christian church, notwithstanding the prodigious diversity among the members as to their degrees of sacred knowledge; upon what principle shall a similar diversity, (even if it could be proved to exist in a still greater degree,) between the Old and the New Testament saints, be urged as an argument against their unity in Christ?

A similar argument has been grounded upon our

Lord's celebrated testimony to John the Baptist, (St. Matt. vi. 11) : " Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of woman, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." These words are supposed to signify that none of the Old Testament saints was greater than John, and yet that the least of the New Testament saints is greater. And thus using John the Baptist as a middle term, it is concluded, that there must be an essential difference between the two bodies, since the least among one of them is greater than the greatest among the other.

If this were indeed the meaning of the text, it would, I think, establish a diversity between the two bodies, so sweeping and fundamental, as to be inconsistent with the unity I advocate, and with the numerous and seemingly unequivocal declarations of Scripture, on which it has been my aim to show that my advocacy is grounded. Attention is thus called to the meaning of this passage ; and it is to be observed that the phrase, " He that is least," in the superlative degree, is here given as the translation of a Greek word in the comparative degree. Ὁ Μικρότερος signifies he that is *lesser*, not he that is *least*. The kingdom of heaven, in the passage, is on all hands admitted to signify the opening dispensation of the gospel. There was at that time in the kingdom of heaven so understood, an individual in many respects lesser than John. He was despised

and rejected, while John was hailed as a burning and a shining light. His ministry was scorned. "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (St. John vii. 48,) was the insulting question; while, on the other hand, Pharisees and Sadducees, Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, flocked to the baptism of John. (St. Matt. iii. 5, 6.) Yet notwithstanding all this, he who in the opening of the dispensation was thus so much lesser than John, was really greater than he. The distinction in the latter part of the verse is not between John and all down to the least of the New Testament saints, but between John and Jesus.* And herein it corresponds with John's own testimony concerning Jesus. "There standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. He must increase, but I must decrease." (St. John i. 26—30, and iii. 30.) He

* Μικρος, parvus. Beza. Vel refertur ad ætatem vel molem; sed prius ad molem quam ad ætatem. Sed Matt. xviii. 10, non videtur significare parvulum ætate aut mole corporis, sed Μικροι ibi sunt conditione et statu vitæ, illi quos homines vulgo contemnunt."—*Leigh*, Critica Sacra.

"Qui autem minor est," minor illo scilicet ætate, predicandi ordine, et præsertim opinione vestrâ. Hoc de seipso loquitur Christus, modeste confirmans illud Johannis testimonium. (Mark i. 7; John i. 27, 30.)—*Lucas Brugenses*, apud P. S.

I believe that Μικρος, and the classical equivalent of Μικροτερος, μειων, will be found invariably to imply either a moral or physical inferiority of stature. The metaphorical use of inferiority in stature for inferiority in estimation is easy and natural.

who is now the lesser must become manifestly the greater; and I who am now the greater must become the lesser.

It would appear, therefore, that this passage, rightly understood, contains nothing to interfere with the unity of the church of God in Christ, considered as consisting of all who have really "trusted in God" from the first and to the last.

Not in externals, then, whether of divine appointment or of human addition, but in the Holy Ghost; in fellowship with the Father, and with the Son; and in love one towards another, we recognise the true unity of the Church of God in Christ.

"There is one Spirit," (Ephes. iv. 4,) and but one; however numerous and various his operations may be: and the basis of genuine christian union is laid in the fact, that no man can belong to the church of God in Christ, except by the renewing power and under the sanctifying teaching of this one Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.)

"The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God," is revealed to our hearts and minds, as the promise of the Father to his incarnate Son; (Isa. xlii. 1—3; St. Matt. xii. 17—21;) and the promise of the Son to his body the church. (St. John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; Acts ii. 33.)

This divine Spirit enters into, and energises in,

every individual member of that sacred body. It is by this power, and by this alone, that any member of the body of Adam, the fallen human race, can be made a member of Christ, or, in other words, be delivered from the antagonist power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. There are indeed powers, moral and intellectual, as well as physical, left in the fallen race; wonderful powers, capable of wonderful achievements; but none adequate to effect this glorious change. In vain does intellect search and strive; in vain does conscience tremble; in vain do the senses range over external nature: all these are indeed witnesses for something, for something greater than man, but of what character, whether good or evil, or both, they do not, they cannot distinctly testify. Had fallen man been left to the unaided exercise of these powers, there never could have been a church of God upon earth, and there never could have been a saved human being in heaven.

True it is that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork;" true, "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Ps. xix.); true, "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead" (Rom. i. 20); true, "he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our

hearts with food and gladness." (Acts xiv. 17.) In all this, there was doubtless a glorious witness to Adam in paradise. The glory of God shone on all his beauteous works; and his holy, happy, intelligent creature, with unclouded intellect and unstained affections, rejoiced in the ennobling manifestation.

All this is true, and more in the same direction might be truly added, but nothing of the kind reaches the present case. Because sin has silenced this witness. Man is fallen from God. And a curse has fallen upon the earth for man's sake. (Gen. iii. 17—19.) The consequence is, that what fallen man can now read in himself, or in the book of nature, conveys no true and adequate information concerning God. It is, indeed, easy to select a few convenient features from the face of nature, and from these to draw a previously desired conclusion; and this is really the character of volume after volume of what is dignified by the title of natural theology. An adequate and impartial view of nature is not taken. The features which make for the desired conclusion are selected most arbitrarily; and those which would equally lead to a very different conclusion are wholly omitted, as if they did not exist.

Life, the various organizations of life, suited to various functions and various enjoyments, these all are laboriously exhibited: and sentiment and even poetry lend their aid to express in glowing terms how full of love and mercy the Author of life must

be: but is this a philosophical reading of the book of nature? Alas! death reigns. And all the lovely objects, selected and displayed as specimens and proofs of the the love and mercy of the Author of nature, become, without exception, the tyrant's prey. If life with its enjoyments speak of love in the Creator, of what does universal death speak? Creation groans under the bondage of corruption. Our philosophers—however unconsciously—are indebted to Holy Scripture for their conclusion; and even in this groaning creation there remain sounds of softness sufficient to supply them with plausible premises. But taken as a whole, and viewed impartially, the book of nature is a book of embarrassment rather than of satisfactory information on the greatest of all questions.

Nor is man's inquiry much advanced by looking within himself; because conscience—though not so far fallen as other departments of his moral being—has ceased to be a safe guide, even in its utmost sincerity. In some things, indeed, its testimony is sure, accusing or else excusing; (Rom. ii. 15;) but this testimony has reference to no fixed standard: it varies with education and habit; and concerning the great question of man's true happiness "there is a way that *seemeth right*"—in all sincerity—"unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. xiv. 12.)

The most enlightened philosopher, left to his unassisted discoveries from nature around and within

him, is like a man groping in the dark, if haply he may find something, which is somewhere, but he knows not where.

"There is a God, the universe exclaims."

But does the universe distinctly tell that there is but *one* God? Or does it present apparent proofs of rival and conflicting powers? If all its agencies, for good and evil, be under ONE supreme control, why their continued conflict? Who, what, where, is THE SUPREME? All is uncertainty.

Thus it was at Athens, (Acts xvii. 23,) and thus it was and must have continued all the world over —except in Jewry—but God himself has spoken, mercifully and distinctly spoken, and made his words of mercy intelligible by deeds, expressive deeds of love. A witness more suited to our fallen condition than the voice of conscience or the book of nature, has come forth from the Father's bosom. A witness who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. (Heb. i. 3.)

It is a species of profaneness to mention this in the mere formal coldness of a passing branch of an argument. Our hearts should burn within us while we read and meditate on this wonder of wonders, this mystery of loving kindness and tender mercy. Our highest privilege, our best happiness on earth, yea, our everlasting salvation, is to know and love this witness, to look unto him, to listen unto him, to read, and mark, and learn, and inwardly

digest, the glad tidings of great joy which he has brought from the invisible world. Jesus Christ is the true witness. Jesus Christ in his adorable person is "God manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Jesus Christ in the history of his life, sufferings, death, and resurrection in the flesh, is a translation, into a language which may be read by fallen man, of the heart and mind towards man, of the living and true God. (1 John iv. 9, 10.)

But even this is not sufficient to meet all the necessities of the case, and gather a church for God, out of this "naughty world." A faithful witness, indeed, and as far as God is concerned, an all-sufficient witness is given in the Lord Jesus Christ. The darkness which obscures the book of nature, does not obscure the face of the Son of God. The uncertainty which attends the verdict of conscience, does not attend the word, the written word, which testifies of Jesus. There shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, full of grace and truth. (2 Cor. iv. 6; St. John i. 14.)

But man's spiritual vision is gone: and although God now holds up before him a perfect object, he will not see it to any good effect. He discovers neither form nor comeliness in it. (Isaiah liii. 1, 2.) A change must be effected in the man himself, or else even Jesus Christ, the true and faithful, the clear and sufficient witness for God, will testify in vain. This is evident from the history of the facts. The light shined in the darkness, and the darkness

comprehended it not. Jesus referred to, and enumerated the most unanswerable testimonies to prove who and what he was, but in vain. (St. John v. 33—40.) As far as reasonable evidence was concerned, this was complete; but reasonable evidence does not reach the true turning point of man's character: there must be also spiritual discernment. (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

How, then, shall the great witness for God be rendered effectual for the calling and salvation of a church from amongst fallen men? The answer, the only true and sufficient answer is,—by the Holy Ghost. It is his revealed office, to open the eyes of man's understanding, and to quicken and engage the affections of his heart, so that he may know and love Jesus Christ, discovering and communing with God in him, and so advancing towards holiness and peace. Without this all would be at a stand still. Though vain man would be wise, (Job xi. 12,) there is a thick veil over his mind against the beginning of wisdom, (Ps. cxi. 10,) and the love of sin is rooted and grounded in his affections; and although clear holy lovely light be come to him in Jesus Christ, he will not see, he loves darkness rather than light, not because the light lacks evidence, but because his deeds are evil. (St. John iii. 19.) "Jesus was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." Alas! for the spectacle here presented of fallen man! So fallen, that he is not only incapable of penetrating the cloud of external

nature, and discovering him who is within; not only incapable of searching the depths of his own spirit, and discovering him who gave it being; but when God himself removes the cloud, and stands manifest in the flesh, man cannot recognise him.

Yet, there is in man a craving which only God can satisfy. What an appetite he has for enjoyment! See how, according to his capacity, his education, his circumstances in society, he toils and toils again, striving to fill himself with satisfaction. But in vain! The student, maturing into the philosopher, advances with earnest and persevering labour from one acquirement to another, and the climax of his wisdom is the knowledge of his own ignorance, while his affections in the meantime linger for this meagre happiness among objects which his reason has pronounced to be vanity. The statesman, the soldier, the merchant, the man of polite literature, the man of domestic endearment, the man of dissipation in the frivolities of fashion, or the brutalities of vice—why all so eager in their pursuit? Because there is an immortal depth in each of them which craves filling. And why so incessant? for they never rest, no amount of attainment ever seems to satisfy? Because their pursuits are among creatures; and no creature, or combination of creatures, can fill so as to satisfy a man. Poor wanderer! he knows not and seeks not God. Poor disappointed wanderer! a sort of indistinct sound of what he desires to be, rises at times in his

bosom and floats upon his ear, but just when he pauses in hope of hearing it, it dies away; and with an aching heart, baffled, discomfited, unsatisfied, and craving still, he turns from one broken cistern to another, and at last sinks into an eternity of thirst, of emptiness, because of separation from God.

Jesus Christ was in the world: "God manifest in the flesh," "for us men and for our salvation." Here is a fountain opened of inexhaustible (because divine) fulness, for empty men; a haven of rest, a bosom of love, a home of peace, for the immortal spirit. Return, O wanderer, return. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come." (Isaiah lv. 1, 2.) Can it be necessary to urge or reiterate the call? Surely the bare authenticated statement of the fact must be sufficient to attract all who hear it.

Alas! far otherwise. How evidence accumulates of man's ruined condition! The fulness of eternal happiness is brought to his door; and a voice from the fountain says sweetly, drink and live for ever; come unto me, ye weary ones and heavy laden, and I will refresh you. But no! The accents of inviting love are heard in vain, and the same voice is compelled to utter the melancholy reproach, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

"*The world knew him not.*" Nay, more; he had selected a nation out of the world, and called them by his name. They were "*his own.*" Surely they at least, if none other men, will hail his approach with joy. No, no: there is no difference by nature, and

no external advantages can make *this* difference; no miracles, no revelation, no ordinances: *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me: the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isaiah i. 2, 3.)

He expostulated with them, and gave them every possible opportunity. Their national expectations were appealed to. They were looking for Elias as the predicted forerunner of Messiah. John the Baptist was sent to them, in the outward aspect, as well as "in the spirit and power of Elias." They went to John in crowds. All classes and ranks of the people, from the country, the towns, the cities, the villages, congregated to his ministry and his baptism. He referred them to Jesus. *I am not he*, he exclaimed, but behold there he is among you, the Lamb of God. (St. John i.) At that critical point, where his ministry might have become saving, it failed of its effect. The people forsook him, without joining Jesus.

Their natural reason was appealed to, when Jesus, having performed such works before them as none other man did, having healed the sick, and raised the dead with a word, said unto them, "Believe me for the very work's sake." (St. John xiv. 11; xv. 24.)

Their natural senses were still further appealed to. They had ears to hear; and God uttered a voice from heaven, bearing witness to Jesus as his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased. (St. Matt. iii. 17.)

Their religious education was appealed to. They gloried in the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets, as their peculiar privilege, and the charter of their salvation. To these they were referred by Jesus, as to so many witnesses for him. (St. John v. 39.)

All in vain! *His own received him not.* But this rejection, though general, was not universal. For thus it is added in the sacred record, "*But as many as received him* to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Then there *were* some! But how was this? Who were these persons? And how or by whom were they made to differ from all the rest? The first answer, in what follows in the Gospel, is, "*Even to them that believe on his name.*" But this leaves the question still open. Believing on his name is indeed declared to make all the difference. But who are they who so believe? Or what is it that inclines and prevails upon some persons to believe, while others, who hear the same words, and have all the same opportunities, do not believe? This inquiry is answered in the next verse, where this description of them traces the blessing to its source. "They were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (St. John i. 10—13.)

A great change is here described. It is not merely an external improvement, or reformation of manners and conduct, but a change of character, so vital, so penetrating to every principle and secret spring of life, internal as well as external; that he who knows best what it is, and what man is without it, has called it a new creation and a new birth. The source from whence it springs is stated here, first negatively, and then positively.

Negatively, *not of blood*, not of natural descent. It does not flow from parent to child. Piety is not propagated as corruption is.

Negatively again; it is *not of the will of the flesh;* not of any natural desire of the man himself. The will of the flesh is the desire or choice or energy of what St. Paul calls the fleshly mind. (Rom. viii. 5—8.) It is capable of wonderful conceptions in natural things, but in spiritual things it is barren. The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto it. (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

Negatively again. It is *not of the will of man;* not by the exertion, however well intended, of any human friend, or teacher, or parent, or pastor. Whatever lessons they may give, whatever ordinances they may administer, whatever entreaties they may urge, whatever restraints they may impose, whatever external order and regularity and formality they may secure; the change here spoken of is out of their reach, they must let that alone for ever.

In saying this, let me not be misunderstood. From these three sources, natural birth, personal

effort, and human instruction, many truly valuable consequences may flow; and I have no disposition to disparage or depreciate these things, in their proper places, and for their proper ends; quite the reverse. From the temperance and chastity of our parents we may inherit many comforts. From our own resolute efforts and self-denial we may derive many excellent fruits. And by the wise and patient cultivation of our instructors, we may advance to many commanding attainments. From these, under the common blessing of God in his providential mercies, which are over all his works, we may derive a robust constitution, persevering industry, and a highly cultivated mind and character. But all these are "of the world," (1 John ii. 15, 16,) and have their reward in the world. None of these reach to *a believing on his name.* This is quite a different thing. And so the source of the blessing is by the Evangelist at last stated positively —"*But of God.*" In every instance where this change occurs among the children of men, it is effected by a special personal exercise of spiritual power by God the Holy Ghost.

Thus we perceive that the agency of God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, is as indispensable to the formation of a church among men, as the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Without this revelation all is darkness and ruin; and without this agency even that revelation itself, though a bright and beautiful light, will shine in vain.

If this be so, then, it may fairly be inquired, how

could there have been a church of God among men, previous to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the consequent gift of the Holy Ghost? And how is this to be reconciled with the unity of the church of God from the beginning of the world, for which I have been contending?

In reply to this inquiry, it is necessary to revert to the distinction, already stated, between the purpose and the performances of God. The purpose of God is one; universal, unchangeable, grasping the end from the beginning, and comprehending all things, and all persons, and all events, from the beginning to the end. In this purpose, therefore, there is no progress. But the performances of God, as they regard creatures, do of necessity partake of the properties, and condescend to the weaknesses of those creatures, and therein become progressive.

For four thousand years after the fall of Adam, members of the church of God were saved, on the credit of what Jesus Christ was to do. And for the last eighteen hundred years, other members of the same church have been saved, for the merit of what Jesus Christ actually did. The salvation, in everything essential to it, as we have seen, has been the same from the days of Abel unto this day. No descendant of Adam ever drew nigh to God as a member of his church, but by Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, the link, the one only link of reunion between God and man. But many men drew nigh to God by faith, and walked with him in holy love,

ages before the birth of Christ. Because Almighty God, who calls things that are not, as though they were, acted on the purpose of the incarnation of the eternal Son, as truly and efficiently as he did on the incarnation itself.

Again, no descendant of Adam ever had forgiveness of his sins, but by the blood of Christ. But many men had forgiveness of their sins, ages before the blood of Christ was shed. Because God acted on the purpose of the great atonement, as truly and efficiently as on the performance of that purpose.

Thus, in like manner, no descendant of Adam ever received the Holy Ghost except as the gift of the risen and ascended Saviour, God and man in one Christ, exalted to the Father's throne. But many men received the Holy Ghost, and in so doing became members of the church of God, ages before the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Because God acted on the purpose of that ascension, as truly and efficiently as he does on the ascension itself.

When, therefore, we hear our Lord, eighteen hundred years ago, saying, "I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by me," (St. John xiv. 6,) we do not understand him to mean, that no man, during the preceding four thousand years of the world's history, came to the Father. Such an interpretation would be in palpable opposition to the facts of the case, as recorded in the Old Testament, where we read of Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham,

that they "walked with God." (Gen. v. 24; vi. 9; xvii. 1.)

In like manner, when we hear our Lord, eighteen hundred years ago, saying, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you;" (St. John xvi. 7;) and when we read the comment of the evangelist in another place, that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified," (St. John vii. 39,) we do not understand the words to mean, that no man, during the preceding four thousand years of the world's history, received the Holy Ghost. Such an interpretation would be in palpable opposition to the facts of the case; for, not to mention the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, it is a fundamental truth that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, (2 Pet. i. 21,) that the Spirit of Christ was in the ancient prophets. (1 Pet. i. 11.)

This is made stronger still, by the fact, that (with one exception easily accounted for) all the miraculous operations of the Holy Ghost, described in the New Testament as his full witness to the truth revealed in Jesus, are recorded to have taken place among the Old Testament members of the church of God.

In the thirty-first chapter of Exodus, we read of men to whom the Spirit of God was given in supernatural *wisdom* and *knowledge*, for the workmanship

of the tabernacle; all of which bore witness to Jesus, who is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. (Heb. viii. 2; ix. 11.) In the thirty-eighth chapter we read of others, similarly endowed with the spirit of *wisdom*, to construct the typical dress of the high priest, thus again bearing witness to Jesus.

In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read of Old Testament members of the church who, through supernatural *faith*, "subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire," and wrought other similar wonders.

We read also of supernatural *healing;* (2 Kings v.;) and *miracles;* (2 Kings iv.;) and *prophesying;* (Numbers xi.;) and *discernment of spirits.* (1 Kings xxii.)

These operations of the Holy Ghost constituted a complete witness to the truth in the church of God, so long as it was the divine purpose to confine that truth and the members of his church to one nation, speaking one language. Supernatural wisdom and knowledge sufficed *to state* the truth with infallible correctness, whether in words or in the construction of types; supernatural faith sufficed to confide, without wavering, on the veracity of the great revealer of the truth for the fulfilment of his promises, and so to glorify God; (Rom. iv. 20;) supernatural healings, miracles, and prophesyings, sufficed to demonstrate the divine origin of the

truth so stated and honoured; and supernatural discernment of spirits sufficed to preserve the truth pure from any mixture of falsehood.

But when the fulness of the appointed time was come for extending the knowledge of the truth, and calling the members of the church, among other nations; an additional operation of the divine Spirit was necessary to constitute a perfect witness. Healings, and other visible miracles, speak alike to all men; but *concerning what* would they speak if the workers of them could not proclaim God's truth to the spectators? To constitute a Jew an adequate witness, he must be able to announce divine truth to the ear, as well as manifest divine power to the eye.

This being the case, when we turn to the New Testament, and reach the period when it was God's design to make Gentiles "fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in the Gospel," we may expect to find the operations of the Holy Ghost in the church not only the same as those already in exercise under the Old Testament dispensation, but including further (and this is the exception I referred to) a supernatural speaking in the languages of the nations. And such is the fact. "To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of *wisdom;* to another the word of *knowledge*, by the same spirit; to another *faith*, by the same spirit; to another the gifts of *healing*, by the same spirit; to another the working of *miracles;* to another *pro-*

phecy ; to another *discernment of spirits ;* to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues." (1 Cor. xii. 8—10.)

It thus appears that the unity of the church of God in Christ, the " one body," animated by the " one Spirit," is a unity inclusive of much diversity ; a unity by comprehension, including in its gracious embrace the circumcision and the uncircumcision, (Eph. ii. 14, 16,) the observer of days and meats, and the non-observer of days and meats ; (Rom. xiv, ;) those who followed with the disciples of Christ, and those who honoured the name of Christ, yet followed not with his disciples; (St. Luke ix. 49. 50 ;) all, in a word, who " hold the head," (Col. ii. 19,) agreeing in primary truths, however widely they may differ in the special peculiarities of inferential interpretation, and by consequence, in secondary ceremonies.

This is a variety such as no visible church on earth ever possessed. The unity of each visible church is a unity by exclusion, not by comprehension ; a unity which maintains itself by rejecting all who will not conform to its secondary specialities. The unity of the church of Rome is by such exclusion, rejecting all who will not submit to the assumed supremacy of the bishop of Rome, and conform to the various customs of the worship and discipline adopted and sanctioned under him. The unity of the church of England is by such exclusion, rejecting all who will not agree in the detailed arrange-

ments of her provincial and diocesan episcopacy, and her union with the state, and who will not conform to the use of her liturgy, and other customs and forms of her worship. The unity of the church of Scotland is maintained by such exclusion, rejecting all who will not agree in her presbyterian form of church government, and extemporaneous mode of public worship. The same may be said of all other bodies of men calling themselves churches. It is of the characteristic littleness of visible churches to exclude non-conformists in visible things; to exclude all who "follow not with us," although they may be devoutly honouring the name, and sincerely rejoicing in the truth and love of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

The unity of the church of God knows nothing of these artificial boundaries of man's erection. True, it is exclusive; but the boundary lines of its exclusion are traced in the fundamental verities of God's revelation, not in the fancied improvements of human tradition. It is a unity of holy sympathy in the relation which every member bears to Christ; a unity of mutual forbearance, and forgiveness, and charity, in the relation which the members bear to one another.

We perceive, also, that it is produced and maintained by "one Spirit," whose gracious influences are not confined within any one form, or custom, or country. No man, whatever country he may inhabit, whatever customs he may grow up in and

practise, whatever forms he may prefer and adopt, has, or can have, any part or lot in this unity, but by the Holy Ghost. "There is one Spirit." And every man, of every land, and custom, and form, in whom that Holy Ghost dwells, witnessing for Jesus, and purifying the heart, is a member of Christ's body, "of his flesh and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.) "There is one body."

The patriarchs who believed God's promises in Christ, and embraced them, and saw the things promised afar, (Heb. xi. 13,) and who thereupon worshipped God with bleeding sacrifices, offered in any place, or every place, where they pitched their tents, by the head of the itinerant family who was in each case his own priest; the Jews, who believed the same promises, repeated with increasing clearness, and announcing the same great Deliverer, and who thereupon worshipped God with bleeding sacrifices, confined to one only place, solemnly consecrated for the purpose, and by one only family, selected and separated to be priests for the whole nation; Gentiles, who believe that the promised Deliverer is come, the one all-sufficient sacrifice of atonement, offered once for all, and no sacrificing priest left upon the earth; and who therefore worship God without blood shedding, in spiritual sacrifices of praise and prayer and almsgiving, (1 Pet. iii. 5; Heb. xiii. 15, 16,)—all these are included in the unity of the one body of Christ, animated, and, as we shall presently proceed to show, sanctified, by

that one and the self-same Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as he will.

But though differences in worship and discipline, and national connexion need not, and in point of fact do not, interfere necessarily with true christian unity, they do, and must interfere with manifest co-operation. Mutual recognition of one another as christian brethren, notwithstanding such differences, is a duty. Co-operation under such circumstances appears to me to be an impossibility. We may sincerely recognise the saving Christianity of men, who lack many things such as we consider very important, such as many among us may consider fairly deducible from scriptural premises; but we cannot cordially co-operate with such men.

Let the government of the church, whether episcopal or presbyterian, be the matter of difference. On each side there is a strong conviction that the view entertained can be proved from Holy Scripture. It is possible, and easy, for sincere men on each side to recognise the saving Christianity of the others, though in error, as is supposed, on this point. But such men cannot sincerely co-operate in any christian mission or enterprise, because the abstraction of essential christian truth in which they agree, cannot be sent on the mission, or engaged in the enterprise. *Men* must be engaged; and men are not abstractions, they are either Episcopalians or Presbyterians. Christian men are honestly so, and ought honestly to say so. Surely, then, there is an essential differ-

ence between acknowledging the Christianity, upon the whole, of persons who differ with us on this point, though we think them so far wrong; and co-operating with them for the dissemination of what we think wrong. We may *talk* together in unity, because we can confine our talk, pro tempore, to those great truths in which we are agreed; but we cannot *act* together in uniformity, because our acts inevitably involve matters in which we are conscientiously at issue. Attempts at such co-operation engender jealousies, lest unfair advantage may be taken on either side of opportunities arising in the course of the proceeding. And therefore our best hope of maintaining "the unity of the Spirit," which it is the duty of us all to "endeavour to keep," in the bond of peace, lies in refraining from all attempts at such outward co-operation. When John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us;" Jesus neither issued an interdict against the man's work, nor an injunction that he should follow and co-operate with "the twelve." He said, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." We hear nothing more of this good man in the gospel narrative; but who can doubt that, though not in outward co-operation, he was in true christian union with the apostolical company? There must have been *something* about their procedure which he did not like, though he was honoring the name of their Master; else why not follow with them? While

serving Christ apart from them, that something, whatever it may have been, was of no practical consequence. It was habitually lost sight of. But had he been constrained into outward co-operation with them, then that something would have been forced upon his attention and upon theirs; and in all probability would have produced some estrangement of spirit. How rich in practical instruction is the Lord's conduct on the occasion!

What meaneth the present demand for christian union? Is it mutual recognition of one another as Christians, on the ground of oneness of spirit, touching the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, and in united contrast with, and protest against, the Romanist and Socinian heresies? Let it be pressed, with affectionate earnestness, throughout the country and throughout the world.

Is it not recognition only, but kindly and brotherly feeling towards one another? Is it "unfeigned love of the brethren," wherever found? Is it watchfulness against malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and *all evil speakings?* O let it be pressed with prevailing energy, and let every Christian devoutly implore the God of all grace and mercy, "from whom all holy desires, good counsels, and just works do proceed," to fill him and all his christian brethren with this spirit of true unity and concord.

But is it outward co-operation even in christian

labours? Let men beware, lest in aiming at it they foment jealousies and multiply estrangements.

And what can be effected by large conference meetings of men of diverse denominations? Christian men who hold, and publicly advocate, the voluntary system to the suppression of all religious *endowments*, and christian men who form, and rigorously carry out, an "Ante-Church and State Society," denouncing all religious *establishments* as the real hindrances to the progress of the Gospel, may meet with christian men who are sincere and attached members of our national church; and they may all talk, and read, and pray together in harmony, each suppressing for the time some of the strongest convictions of his heart.

I will not venture to assert that such meetings are not edifying to some men. I believe there are christian men of such temperament of both mind and body, as to derive a delightful quickening of all their emotions of brotherly love from such meetings. Their sense of congruity is not offended by the consciousness that the harmony around them is temporary, and maintained by watchful management in every speaker to avoid for the time—without the slightest notion of renouncing—certain topics of known discord. They are excited, gratified, perhaps truly edified, by the diversities of gifts in the speakers, and they are content to enjoy the harmony, such as it is, while it lasts.

Other men cannot do so. Existing differences are

forced upon their attention by the presence of their known representatives; and seeing around them the living defenders of the most antagonist positions, on many and grave questions, without hearing a syllable from any of them on any controverted topic; they cannot refrain from asking themselves, have these men indeed given up their various positions of hostility, and is this indeed christian union? Alas, the answer is too obvious. Not a thought of recantation has passed through any mind. Yet a little while, and these very men will be again occupied as we have seen them heretofore. And *then*, what becomes of the recollection of such meetings? Is it not a strong temptation to harbour estranging suspicions, that the harmonious talk was not the expression of sincerity and truth?

If the various bodies, or denominations, or churches, into which professing Christians are divided, were composed of *really christian* individuals, and of such *only*, the case would be very different. *Then* the essential points of agreement would so powerfully and practically outweigh all minor and collateral elements of division, that the "unity of the Spirit" already really subsisting between such persons, might become openly and visibly a unity of action, as well as harmoniously a unity of speech.

This is the state of things contemplated by the pious and eloquent advocates of unity, whose speeches, and sermons, and essays, are now multiplying around us. This, or something approaching to this, was

the state of things in the primitive churches, when the exclamation, "See how those Christians love one another," was extorted from heathen spectators. But is this the *actual* state of things with which we have to do? Are the various denominations composed of really christian individuals, and of such *only?* Are all the guests, with whom the marriage is furnished, clothed with the right and true garment? All the fishes enclosed in the Gospel net, good? All the virgins who carry lamps, wise? These questions themselves suggest unavoidably the scriptural and fatal answer—No.

And here is the real seat of the difficulty. The *true* Christians in each denomination are surrounded by, and mixed up with, those who are only *professed* Christians. Distressing as the truth is, we may not shut our eyes, either to the fact, or to the scriptural predictions of the fact, that till the Lord himself shall return, the proportions of professed Christians shall far outnumber the true; the gate of profession being wide, and the way broad, while the gate of real vital Christianity is straight, and the way narrow. The true Christians in each denomination are too modest, too diffident, too distrustful of themselves; and many of the professors only in each denomination are too confident and too plausible, to render a visible separation between the two practicable. Consequently any visible movement towards visible unity, must include persons who are verily and indeed destitute of the only principle on which true

christian unity can safely rest. These persons are impediments in the way, not only personally considered, but also in the influences which they never fail to exert, more or less, directly or indirectly, on the true Christians of their respective denominations. By these persons collateral things on either side are magnified into essential things; what ought to be--and among *real* Christians, left to themselves, would be—elements of mutual forbearance in love, become, under such sinister influences, elements of debate and division. Hence the disturbing ingredients in every visible mixture, and hence the failure of every experiment at amalgamation and co-operation.

Here is the painful but stubborn, and I fear utterly unmanageable answer to such animating and amiable effusions as the following.

"And may there not," it is exclaimed with holy enthusiasm, "be such a visibility of union, without, on the part of any, the compromise of a solitary principle? Assuredly there may. No principle—nothing worthy to be called a principle—nothing that is essential to Christianity—nothing that enters into the constitution of the christian character, is or can be sacrificed, or can be required to be sacrificed, in order to that union of which we speak, and for which the Redeemer prays. For it is a union, not of professed Christians merely, but of real Christians—*the true and genuine disciples of Christ.* All that is essential to Christianity, all that is necessary

to the constitution of the christian character, must be embraced and possessed by each; and that which each possesses and regards as essential, as it can be sacrificed by none, so will the sacrifice not be required by any." *

This is lovely; and such union does, I think, truly and substantially exist among "real Christians, the true and genuine disciples of Christ, each of whom embraces and possesses all that is necessary to the constitution of the christian character." Had we visible denominations of such persons, we might, and soon would have, "such a visibility of union."

But where are such visible bodies to be found? And how is such visible union to be manifested? In every denomination professed Christians, who are not true and genuine disciples of Christ, abound. In every denomination, considered as a visible body, men who have not embraced, and who do not possess all that is necessary to the constitution of the christian character, constitute the majority. In every denomination men are found so impracticable as to be unwilling to make sacrifices themselves, and so unreasonable as to expect that sacrifices shall be made by others.

The difference between the "unity of the Spirit" actually existing among the members of the true christian church, and this "*visibility* of union," is felt by the eloquent preacher to whom I have referred. He says:—

* *Sermons on Christian Union*, by Dr. Raffles. P. 6. *London*, Hamilton, Adams, and Co. 1845.

"Thus possessing all the great principles essential to Christianity, recognised and acknowledged alike by all, whatever may be said against it, and however by accidental circumstances it may be unhappily obscured and rendered invisible to others, there is UNITY and UNION in the christian church in their reality and truth. What then should prevent the removal of those accidental circumstances, that the union which is thus real, and recognised by the eye of God, may become visible and obvious to the eye of man? There may be shades and phases of sentiment, not affecting any fundamental truth—there may be forms and methods of speech, differing from each other, and yet expressing the same important doctrine—there may be diversities of discipline and modes of worship, all regarded as correct and scriptural by those who practise them—but as these things are confessedly non-essential to Christianity, as it is allowed on all hands that a man may be equally a Christian, and yet differ from other Christians in some or many, or even all of these respects —that these things affect in no degree the reality of his state and character in the sight of God, and can have no influence whatever either to diminish or augment that essential unity which a participation in all the great fundamental principles of the religion of Jesus must of necessity induce—why should they be allowed to interfere with the visible and audible expression of that unity before the world?" *

* Ibid.

Why? Because, alas! Christians on every side are mixed up—and so mixed that no man can separate—with men who do not, and will not, confess that the things here enumerated, and such like things, are non-essential to Christianity, by men who do not, and will not, allow that a man may be equally a Christian, and yet differ from other Christians in some or many, or even all of these respects. These are the men who interfere with the visible and audible expression of christian unity. And from such men no visible denomination on earth can effectually free itself.

It is further asked, "Are men held back from a visible union and cordial co-operation with each other in the scenes of social and civil life, by a difference of figure, of feature, or of stature?" And it is most truly observed, that "the absurdity of making such things as these grounds of alienation and distance is apparent to all. Why, then," it is added, "should things in connexion with religion, confessedly as non-essential, operate to impede or prevent that visible union amongst the disciples of Christ, which is but the expression of an union that actually exists already?" *

It is taken for granted in this illustration, that all the men visibly uniting and cordially co-operating in civil life, however they may differ in figure, in feature, or in stature, are agreed in truthfulness and honesty; in other words, that they are "true

* Ibid. p. 7.

and genuine disciples" of social order and civil contracts. And in the application, it is taken for granted that all the persons invited to visible union, are genuine disciples of Christ, among whom a true spiritual union actually exists already. This, as we have seen, is not the case; and with reference to the illustration I would ask—suppose the various bodies of the moral and social world to be situated as the various denominations of professing Christians are: suppose the genuine disciples of social order and sound morality to be mixed up—so mixed that no man could separate—with multitudes who are not scrupulous in matters of truth and honesty, with multitudes differing, not merely in figure and feature and stature, but in principle also; would not the visible union and co-operation of social and civil life become matters of caution rather than of cordiality? Would not social intercourse require the jealous guards of introductions and recommendations? And would not civil contracts partake of the character of legal security against mutual fraud, rather than of spontaneous confidence in mutual honour?

But the question is put and answered by our warm-hearted and devoted advocate of unity himself.

"How then, it may be asked, is the union to be demonstrated and made apparent? His answer is—"by intercourse and confraternity between the various sections of the christian church. If there must

be *Ephraim* and *Judah* still, and they must dwell in separate tents—by Ephraim and Judah entering each other's tents, and reciprocating acts and deeds of sacred hospitality and christian friendship—by a combined and united testimony, delivered in various ways, and as circumstances may suggest and require, to great and confessedly important truths—by cordial co-operation, so far as may be, in the promotion of common interests and objects—by mingling in devotional exercises, and occasionally surrounding together the table of the Lord." *

This would indeed be delightful, if all the men of Ephraim and all the men of Judah were men of God—each willing to give up much that he would personally prefer for the sake of union with the rest, and all incapable, because of their relation to Christ, of taking unfair advantage of reciprocating acts and deeds of sacred hospitality and christian friendship among one another. Then might the two tents become one! But if the men of God in each tent be surrounded by men of Belial, who profess to be men of God, and who cannot be fully and personally detected, although they are daily aiding and abetting unchristian mischief;—men who will yield no opinion, neither relinquish any practice, however hostile—men ready, on either side, to take advantage, for party or personal purposes, of friendly words or deeds of unsuspecting confidence on the other side; how then are the brotherly inter-

* Ibid. pp. 7, 8.

course and cordial co-operation here described to be carried on? Alas! alas! it is painfully true, that the real disciples of Christ, instead of having a ransomed world to themselves, where the unity that is in their hearts might reign in open and heavenly triumph, are in this fallen world "like sheep in the midst of wolves," like turtle-doves in the midst of kites. Is the christian heart prompted to cry, "O that I had wings as a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest! I would hasten my escape from this stormy wind and tempest?" Or is the wish breathed forth in holy earnestness, O! that all the true brethren could be separated from the false, and made one happy family! O! that all the wheat could be divided from the chaff, and bound in one bundle of life, and love, and joy?

Patience, patience; thus it shall be indeed, but not yet. As yet we must serve the Lord, not in a chorus of conscious and happy union, but in the details of duty, which occupy each servant in his own place, studying to "be quiet and mind his own business." * The various businesses may, and in some respects must, have a separating tendency for the present among the servants; but all being conducted with reference to the Master's will, and the Master's return, have a truly and permanently uniting tendency. True union is in labour—division of labour—"All members have not the same office," all servants have not the same work, or the same

* 1 Thess. iv. 11.

sphere of work—and the true enjoyment of union must, like every other true christian enjoyment, wait for Him who will call each servant from his allotted station, saying, "Well done," and desiring all his faithful servants, so called, to "enter into the joy of their Lord.'"* Till then they can have but faint glimpses of the glory, small foretastes of the sweetness.

An agricultural district is enjoying the best and truest unity attainable among men, when every farmer is diligently engaged on his own farm, though one prefer plough, and another spade husbandry. It is not by meeting to talk upon the subject, but by each "minding his own business," that each is best consulting for the best interests of his landlord, and for the best interests of himself and his family; and not only so, but it is thus that each is most effectually advancing the cause of all against a common enemy. This is transferable to every class of the community considered in their commercial, manufacturing, and professional pursuits; and not less justly so to the christian church as comprising them all. The church is enjoying the truest and best unity she is capable of, while her great Head is invisible, when every member in his vocation and ministry is diligently employed in his own place, and at his own appointed work. It is thus that each is most efficiently honoring his Lord, serving himself and his immediate connexion, and strength-

* Rom. xii. 6—8.

ening the hands of all against the common enemy. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith: or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." * And let us be more concerned about really loving our brethren, than about seeming to have co-operation with them.

* St. Matt. xxv.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST.—ITS HOLINESS.

What christian holiness is—The power by which holiness is produced in the church of God—The state of fallen man—Mr. Ward's statement on this subject examined—Only by "the truth" can holiness be produced—No congruity in any man—The young Ruler, St. Mark x., *no objection—Cornelius the Centurion no objection—Sanctifying truth—The Word of God in its completeness—Blessing, guiding, warning, promising—The nature and amount of holiness to be expected—Sincere, progressive, imperfect—Where is such holiness to be found?*

Among all classes of Christians, and of all who profess and call themselves Christians, however differing in other respects, there exists a very gratifying unanimity on this point, "that we should be holy." And indeed it is difficult to conceive how any men, professing to derive their religion from the Holy Scriptures, could hesitate concerning this. St. Paul says to the members of the church, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thess. iv. 3.) And again he says, "Without holi-

ness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.) And St. Peter, when pressing holiness upon the strangers and pilgrims in this world, whom he describes as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ," recites the words of the Lord himself, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 15, 16.)

But while all agree in saying that Christians should be holy, the agreement unhappily is discovered to be only verbal. The phrase does not possess a definite meaning, common to the minds of all who use it. On the contrary, each uses it in his own special meaning; and on further examination we discover among them differences, not superficial merely, but fundamental, in the opinions they entertain concerning the nature of holiness itself, and consequently of course concerning the mode of its production and increase in the church.

In the present chapter I shall endeavour, first, to state briefly, but I hope scripturally, what true holiness is.

Secondly, to point out the power by which holiness is produced in the church of God.

Thirdly, to describe the means by which that power is ordinarily exercised.

Fourthly, the nature and amount of the holiness to be expected in the church.

And so conclude with a few observations on the

additional proof to be derived from all this, as to what the church of God is.

I. Holiness is conformity to the character of God. He is the "Holy One"—the Holy Father—the Holy Jesus—the Holy Spirit. To have fellowship with him in his characteristic feelings and principles; to love what he loves; to hate what he hates; to desire what he promises; to rejoice in his will in all things, even where it crosses our own wills; on all such occasions to find the ready instinctive utterance of the heart to be, "O my Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (St. Matt. xxvi. 39.) This is to be holy; and every nearer approach to this is an advance in holiness.

As the holy will of God pervades the universe, and is essentially and unalterably sovereign over all, there can be no real happiness or permanent safety in opposition to it. There may, for a time, be an appearance of safety, and a delusion which is mistaken for happiness, without any reference to the will or power of God. But such delusion can endure at the longest only for a little while; and to every immortal creature it is most solemnly true, that there can be no real happiness except in conformity to God. God is love; holy love. Love is the perfection of holiness and happiness in man. Man was made for it; and herein it differs essentially from all positive institutions which were made

for man, in order to help him into the exercise of this holy love. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 16.) "This is the first and great commandment of the law; and the second is like unto it." Let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (St. Matt. xxii. 36—39; 1 John iv. 7.) "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "The end of the commandment is love." The end, object, or design of the great redemption is love. (Rom. xiii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 5; John iv. 9, 10, 19.) The essence of holiness in man is love; the love of God reigning supremely in his affections, the love of his fellow-men overcoming selfishness in his conduct.

It will be found important to keep this scriptural account of what holiness is, habitually in our view—that its seat in man is the heart, not the flesh, and that it consists essentially in a state of character, not in a round of performances.

II. We may now proceed, in the second place, to point out the power by which holiness is produced in the church of God.

That church consists of fallen men: that is, of men who are naturally alienated from God, so that they resist, and even resent, his holy will to their own misery; and selfish in themselves, so that they resist one another unto contention and division. They present a perfect antithesis to holiness in the de-

scription given of them by the Apostle, "Hateful, and hating one another." (Tit. iii. 3.) By what power, then, can holiness be originated in such creatures?

The real state of moral character, with reference to God and his holy law, into which man has fallen, is a fundamental topic in the great controversy in which we are now engaged. Because the Romanist and Romanizing writers, against whose statements we feel compelled to contend, represent fallen man as capable, in his fallen state, of performing such actions and cultivating such dispositions and habits, as commend him to God and prepare him by a natural fitness or "congruity" to receive holy infusions of divine grace. I subjoin a statement in which the gospel, or what the writer calls the Lutheran doctrine, is contrasted with the supposed orthodoxy and excellency of natural religion.

"Whether any heresy has ever infested the church so hateful and unchristian as this doctrine, (the Lutheran doctrine of justification,) it is perhaps not necessary to determine: none certainly has ever prevailed so subtle and extensively poisonous. It is not only that it denies some one essential doctrine of the gospel, (as *e.g.* inherent righteousness;) this all heresies do: it is not only that it corrupts *all* sound christian doctrine, nay, the very principle of orthodoxy itself; though this also it certainly does: but its inroads extend further than this; as far as its formal statements are concerned, it poisons at the

very root, not Christianity only, but natural religion. That obedience to the will of God, with whatever sacrifice of self, is the one thing needful, that sin is the one only danger to be dreaded, the one only evil to be avoided: these great truths are the very foundation of natural religion; and inasmuch as this modern system denies those to be essential and necessary truths, yea, counts it the chief glory of the gospel that under it they are no longer truths; we must plainly express our conviction, that a *religious heathen*, were he really to accept the doctrine which Lutheran language expresses, so far from making any advance, would sustain a heavy loss in exchanging *fundamental truth* for fundamental error."*

Much might be said, and it is difficult to refrain and say nothing, on the gross misrepresentations contained in several of these clauses; but I have in this place cited the passage merely as a specimen of the views entertained by Romanist and Romanising theologians, of man in his natural state.

We, on the contrary, represent "the condition of man after the fall of Adam, to be such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God." And we say, that "works done by man, in his natural unconverted state," before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, "are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men

* Ward's Ideal of a Christian Church, p. 304.

meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done; we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." (Arts. x. and xiii.)

In answer to the inquiry, by what power holiness is produced in the church of God, much depends upon which of these views of fallen man is correct; which is in accordance with the revealed mind of God.

If man can prepare himself so as to deserve grace; if what are called the virtues of natural religion, the moralities of unconverted men, be so acceptable to God as to attract his favorable regard towards the men who perform them, in preference to their fellow-men; if the edifices of nature can thus become a vestibule to the temple of grace; and if grace be not a *reversal* of the order of our fallen nature, but only *the complement* of nature's labours;* then, although it be conceded that a man is not able to succeed in making himself holy until he has received the assistance of that grace; yet it follows from such a view that he can *begin* the saving process by natural effort and on natural principles. And the inference is easy, that as he goes on, he will be able, by a continuation of natural effort, and on the same natural principles, to aid at least in his advancement in holiness. And thus a door is opened for what St. Paul condemns as

* *Ward*, p. 294.

"will worship," for a discipline on natural principles, for a multiplication of self-imposed duties, such as find no place in the commandments of God. "Hence the man *devises* ever fresh methods of self-denial, and subjects his lower nature to rules more and more nearly inflexible; hence, in part, the unspeakable benefit of monastic and conventual institutions, of holy resolutions, of solemn vows." *

On the other hand: if man in his natural state cannot please God, (Rom. viii. 8;) if he cannot know God, (1 Cor. i. 21; Rom. i. 22, 23; St. Luke x. 21;) if he cannot by natural efforts, however strenuous, invest himself with a congruity for grace; but if all such efforts, however highly esteemed among men, yet having self for their end, without any reference to the will of God, do in truth partake of the nature of sin in his sight, (St. Luke xvi. 15;) if the statements which I have just now transcribed from our Articles, and which we think are grounded on God's sacred word, be really true: then the process of man's acceptance with God must originate altogether with God himself: not with man who willeth or man who runneth, but with God who showeth mercy, on whom he will shew mercy. (Rom. ix. 15, 16.) Then every member of the church of God from among fallen men is His workmanship, created anew by supernatural grace in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 10.) He advances by the same grace. The principle is quite a reversal of natural law: it

* *Ward*, p. 224.

is a supernatural interference, rendering the love of Christ a constraining motive, and producing holy love in return; not resulting from a daily drill in self-denial, apart from the temporal duties of the man's station in life, but resulting from what Christ has done for him, known and believed: and leading him in the duties of his station, whatsoever he does, whether he eats or drinks, to do all (however imperfectly at the best, yet) with an ultimate design to please God, and "worthily to magnify his holy name, through Christ our Lord."

Thus his holiness does not consist in special works self-imposed, (his works are the ordinary works of life imposed by divine Providence,) but in the principle from which all his works, even the most ordinary, proceed. And therefore he does not "devise" duties for himself, or subject himself to "rules more and more nearly inflexible;" he does not separate himself from the activities of benevolence in the retirement of "monastic or conventual institutions;" he does not lacerate his flesh, or injure his health; he does not say prayers by count, or practise meditations by the hands of his watch or clock. For the performance of such works, to which God has not called him, he could not expect the grace of God. They must be done, if done at all, on natural principles. The true Christian does them not. If it be pressed upon him that he ought to practise such works, to habituate himself to hardship, in order that he may be ready at once for any arduous under-

taking to which he may be providentially called; his answer is, I trust in the Lord's promise, that "as my day is, so shall my strength be," * and in the gracious assurance given to us by St. Paul that "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tried above what we are able, but will with the trial, also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.) Thus his practical object is not to arrest attention by exaggerated works of supposed extra meritoriousness; but quietly, steadily, and unostentatiously, in the appropriate duties of the state of life in which he is providentially placed, to keep the commandments *of God:* or, as it is expressed in our catechism, "to do his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him."

Which of these views, then, is the true one? which is in accordance with the mind of God, and therefore with real holiness in man? The question is momentous. How is it to be tried? By what standard is examination to be conducted, and judgment to be pronounced?

Our opponents in this controversy appeal to authentic biography of sainted men, or to living examples, or to that nondescript something to be found nowhere, catholic consent, as a primary rule of faith. It is in the following terms that Mr.

* See Deut. xxxiii. 25. And for the christian application of such promises, see Joshua i. 5, and compare the Apostle's appropriation of it, and confidence derived from it, in Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

Ward commends what, in his opinion, is the only thread which can guide the inquirer aright:

"In the present profoundly disturbed and unsettled state of theological sentiment, no one who has not the happiness of resting with secure and undoubting confidence in some safe harbour, will allow himself wilfully to shut his eyes to any *exhibition of virtue and self-denial*, from whatever quarter it may present itself; by so doing, he incurs serious danger of losing hold of *that thread* which can *alone* guide him safely through the bewildering labyrinth of opinion which surrounds us." *

But how, it may be asked, is the inquirer to form his judgment of the exhibitions before his eyes? How to distinguish between exhibitions of virtue and self-denial, and exhibitions of pride and self-conceit? May he not mistake the one for the other, and so be involved in still more embarrassing labyrinths? By what standard shall he test any exhibition set before his eyes, whether in the histories of ascetic saints, or in the examples of living members of some visible church, to ascertain whether its most striking features be those of virtue or vice, of real holiness or subtle corruption, of genuine humility seeking God's glory, or self-complacent pride seeking its own glory, and name, and fame, for austerity or singularity among men? Is the private judgment of the inquirer, on all such exhibitions, to be safely depended upon for a just and true discernment be-

* Ideal, &c., page 208.

tween good and evil? If not, Mr. Ward's only guiding thread may lead astray. It cannot possibly perform the valuable office he assigns to it, except on the principle of private judgment being safe and trustworthy. Again we ask, by what standard is examination to be conducted, and judgment pronounced? If appeal be made to a supposed innate sense of right and wrong in all mankind, our answer is a counter-appeal to experience. *Some* sense or feeling of right and wrong, at some point of separation, is indeed universally found among men; but it is not innate, as appears by the fact, that it is not uniform: it varies in different countries, and in different stages of civilization, and is manifestly the creature of circumstances. Its verdict is not to be depended upon, being much more frequently and extensively false than true. "There is a way that *seemeth right* unto a man, and the end thereof are the ways of death." *

But thanks to God, we are not left without a genuine standard which may always and everywhere be depended upon. He who is indeed infallible has spoken unto men, and has caused to be written and preserved for our use such an amount of what he said, as is sufficient to make every man who believes it wise unto everlasting salvation. (St. John xx. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 14—17.) Looking to the Word of God, not to the exhibitions of men, I would re-write the above paragraph thus:—In the present profoundly disturbed and unsettled state of theological senti-

* Prov. xvi. 25.

ment, no one who has not the happiness of resting with secure and undoubting confidence in some safe harbour, will allow himself wilfully to shut his eyes to the Holy Scriptures, which are given by inspiration* of God; by so doing he incurs serious danger of losing hold of the thread which *alone* can guide him safely through the bewildering labyrinth of opinions which surround us.

Appealing, then, to the Holy Scriptures, which of the above-mentioned views of man in his natural state will be found in accordance with our only infallible standard? Here, of course, we must exercise our private judgment on the texts of Scripture, and is this unlawful? May an inquirer, with much advantage, exercise his private judgment on exhibitions of men who may possibly be hypocrites: and may he not do so, on the Word of the God of truth, who cannot deceive?

It appears to me to be the doctrine of Scripture,

* The part of Mr. Ward's book, which appears to betray the recklessness of a partizan, rather than the conscientiousness of an humble Christian, is that in which he insinuates that the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures is a doubtful one. Does he really mean this, in the face of the evidence adduced and corroborated? Or is it only a new version of the old Roman Catholic cavil which would deprive the mind of reasonable evidence altogether, (even for the origin of Scripture,) thereby seeking to cast it prostrate on the authority of the church? I have said for *the origin* of the Scripture; because I know and feel that for many important *contents* of the Scripture we cannot have reasonable evidence: but then, having such evidence for the divine origin, the mind reposes for such contents, on the authority of God, not of men.

that man in his natural state does not, and cannot, in anything, serve or please the true God. There is no such Being in his thoughts. Whatever notions he may have of the physical attributes of a great First Cause; he has, and can have, no correct idea of the moral character of Jehovah, God in Christ, the only God who has any real existence. Every man, therefore, in his natural state, who has not become an infidel, is an idolater. So far as he has religion at all, his mind and affections are engaged with a phantom or phantoms of his own imagination. The character ascribed to this idol, or idols, varies exceedingly, from the bloodthirsty Juggernath, whose monster car crushes its thousands of prostrate votaries on the banks of the Ganges, to the soft conniver at sin worshipped by the philosophical Unitarian or Socinian in civilized Christendom. But the true God is nowhere discovered but in Jesus, and no man can say, or know, or believe, that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost. (St. John xiv. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 3.) In other words, a man must be taught by the Holy Ghost, that is, he must cease to be in his natural state, before he can have a single correct thought of God. "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (St. Matt. xi. 27.) "The Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness or hardness of their heart." (Eph. iv. 17, 18.)

And while their mental state is thus described as one of ignorance and blindness as it respects God, their moral state is described as being accursed of him. It is only in the Gospel, that any blessing is announced or given to the heathen. This was promised to Abraham, and as many in all nations as hear and believe the Gospel, are blessed with faithful Abraham. But as many as are of the works of the law, that is, (clearly by the force of the contrast,) all who do not hear, or hearing, do not believe, the Gospel, to wit, all men in all countries who are in their natural state, are "*under the curse;*" for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. iii. 8—10.)

This is precise: and who of the race of Adam has ever been able to extricate himself from this curse? "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." And what was the result of his search? Did he find any who had cultivated their natural powers, so as to work themselves into a congruity for his grace? The answer of truth is, "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Ps. xiv. 2, 3.) When St. Paul cites this and other similar passages, to prove concerning Jew and Gentile that they are all under sin; in his application of the whole he prostrates all pretentions to congruity for grace in any, by the solemn declaration that in respect of acceptance with God, which

was his subject, and is now ours, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE, for that all have sinned. (Rom. iii. 9—22.) St. James, also, estimating sin by the principle, and not the quantity of disobedience, says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is *guilty of all*." (James ii. 10.) Every man, therefore, who is not in Christ, is *guilty of all* in the sight of God; however his character and conduct may exceed those of other men in the sight and estimation of society.

These and such passages of Holy Scripture seem to me to justify wholly the statements made in our Articles upon this subject; and to exclude what Mr. Ward calls "the catholic doctrine of congruity,"* as a vain fiction and a dangerous flattery.

Objections are urged against the conclusion thus arrived at! of course: where is the truth against which no objection is urged? The most important as being derived not from general reasonings, neither from the dicta of uninspired men in any age, but from the Scripture itself; are those grounded upon the histories of the amiable young ruler whom Jesus loved, and the Gentile centurion Cornelius?

I proceed to consider these.

First, the Ruler. (St. Mark x. 17—27.)

He came to Jesus, kneeled before him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? I suppose this man to have been

* Ideal, &c., page 195.

sincerely desirous to attain eternal life. He had done much for the purpose according to his own principles. He had carefully, and as he seems to have thought, perfectly fulfilled all his moral duties, and supposing he had found in Jesus a teacher, who could set him right if there were anything still wrong, or anything defective, he came to him. His coming to him, and calling him *Master*, contained a profession at least, and in this case there is every reason to say a sincere one, that he esteemed him qualified to teach. His high opinion of Jesus, indeed, led him to use an expression for which he received a reproof, "Why callest thou me *good?*"

Absolutely considered, goodness implies essential excellence, holiness in heart, this is true of God only. The highest creature in its highest estate has nothing that can be really and truly called its own. It is and must be dependent on the will of another. It has and can have nothing but what is derived from another. In this high sense, therefore, no creature is good. Relatively, indeed, creatures may be said to be good, when, and as long as, they fully answer the purpose for which God designed them to his own glory, and thus all this our lower creation is called good, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good." (Gen. i. 31.)

It might be urged that it was only in this relative sense, the man used the expression good, and that consequently the reproof he received wears the

aspect of being hypercritical, or captious. But we shall see in the sequel that there was a most gracious and benevolent object in calling such a man's attention to the difference between relative and absolute goodness. Relative goodness was his idol, on the strength of which he was building his hopes of acceptance with God, while in truth there was no love of God in his heart.

His question was—"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And Jesus answered him, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery; Do not kill; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Defraud not; Honour thy father and mother."

The apparent deficiency of this answer, compared with our Lord's language on other occasions, suggests an inquiry into his object in giving such an answer on this occasion. He here confines himself entirely to the commandments of the *second* table of the law. Elsewhere he combines the *first* and great commandment, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (St. Matt. xxii. 37—39.) The omission here proves some special design in the answer. Had the Lord's object been to refer the man directly and ultimately to the moral law, that by obedience thereto he might

attain eternal life as a reward of his moral merit; he would not surely have omitted all mention of the first and greatest commandment of the law.

His object in this first answer appears to have been to show to the man himself; and, in so doing, to show to his disciples; and by their record of it, to show to us all, for our instruction, how far this man had gone, and how far he had not gone, or was willing to go. To this end, he selected those commandments with reference to which, in the letter of them, this young man could give a satisfactory answer. Doubtless, taken in their spiritual extent, according to our Lord's interpretation of them elsewhere, even these commandments would have condemned him. He might have been convicted, as the lawyer was, by the extended application of the word neighbour. (St. Luke x. 28—37.)

The lawyer came *tempting* Jesus—the young man now before us did not so: Jesus adopts a different course with him. He admits his plea, and *loves* him.

This was an amiable man, valuable and lovely! We would not undervalue such loveliness. Compelled as we are to deny that it can save the soul, that it can establish any justifying claim upon, or cultivate any real congeniality with, Him who alone is essentially good; we do not deny, nay, we are forward to declare, that it can and does embellish the character of man amongst his fellow-men, and endear the possessor of it to every right mind. *Jesus loved him.*

In the exercise of human complacency he loved this man, even while, in his higher character as a faithful witness for God, he tried him so as to drive him from his company. It was thus that in the exercise of human affection and tenderness he wept for Lazarus, or rather in sympathy with Mary and her sister, while, in his higher character, he was about to call Lazarus out of his grave, and thus remove the cause of the sisters' sorrow. (St. John xi. 33—44.) Jesus loved him!

So far well, and if Jesus had been content with this in him, we might well be content with the same. But he was not content. He said, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way; sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come take up thy cross, and *follow me*."

Here the whole force of the *first* table of the law is brought to bear upon him; not in a theory leaving room for self-deception, but in a practical result testing sincerity to the core. Had he been desired in words to love God, he would probably have answered, and sincerely, though in self-ignorance, that he did so; or had he been desired to do something in proof of his love to God, which did not interfere with his love of money, he would probably have done it and never suspected the lurking idolatry of his heart; but when the Master Teacher touched the very idol itself, and desired him in proof of his love to God to cleanse the temple of his heart,

cutting off the gilded mischief which tied its affections to the earth; he winced from the probe, and could not bear the test. Had he been invited to look to heaven, while his earthly footing remained firm, he might have supposed he was doing so, and deceived himself; but Jesus directed him to cut away from under him all earthly dependence, and look only to God for happiness. This could be done only by grace. To have done it in this instance would have looked very much as if his natural amiability had prepared in him a congruity for grace; but what are we to say to the fact, that amiable as he was, and naturally diligent as he had been, no sooner is he really tried at the turning point between what is amiable among men, and what is acceptable to God, than he shows, instead of a congruity for grace, an utter repugnance to it: "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." (ver. 22.)

What, then, had his natural amiability of disposition, and exemplary morality of conduct, done for him? Pleased men? Clearly so. Prepared him for grace? As clearly not so. Was he not one of those whose reliance on their moral works (not the works, but reliance on the works) had estranged from the humbling principles of God's dealings with men, and to whom Jesus said, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you?"

It is easy to exclaim, in "language of unbounded and indignant reprobation," against such doctrines;

it is easy to profess that "the* task even of specifying and reciting them seems almost a pollution." † But man's indignation, whether real or affected, cannot obliterate the unerring words of God.

Now the Centurion.

In the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read of this man. *He had heard the word of the Lord in the preaching of the Gospel, previous to the circumstances mentioned in this chapter.* A Gentile he was, with reference to the Jewish nation, but a heathen he was not, with reference to revealed truth. This we learn distinctly by the address of the Apostle Peter to him and his household, as recorded in verses 36, 37. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (he is Lord of all:) *that word I say, ye know*," &c. It is of the utmost consequence to observe and remember this: indeed the force of the whole history in its application to the question before us, turns upon this very point.

Cornelius was not a man who had never heard the Gospel till Peter came to him; for Peter's first words in addressing him declare that he already knew the Gospel. This explains the secret of his character. The word had come to him, not in word only, but also in power. In the power of the Spirit it had touched his heart, and influenced his life. He was accepted of God; he was a man of inward piety and prayer, and of outward righteousness in almsgiving and other good works. Such is his de-

* Ward, p. 248. † Ibid. p. 195.

scription in the second verse of the chapter. This was the man of whom God made choice to show clearly to the Jews, in a way that should convince their prejudices, that the blessings of true religion were to be extended among the Gentiles. Cornelius was commanded to send for the Apostle Peter. (verses 3—6.) He did so. (verses 7, 8.) The manner in which Peter was commanded to comply with this invitation from a Gentile is singularly instructive. (verses 9—16.) The contents of the sheet represented men of all nations, Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean. The origin of this distinction was between those animals which were pronounced fit, and those pronounced unfit for sacrifice unto God; fit or unfit for food among the Jews. The distinction came to be applied to nations consecrated or not consecrated to God. The Jews esteemed themselves clean, and all others unclean. The command to Peter to *slay and eat*, signified that ceremonial and national distinctions were to be observed no longer. His refusal shows that he was still under the influence of Jewish prejudice. God's reply announces the precious truth that he had cleansed the Gentile heart. He had consecrated to himself a people hitherto considered unclean, but now no longer to be called so. Peter was slow to apprehend the meaning, and while he was doubting about it, the all-directing hand of God had prepared the means for carrying his gracious purpose into effect. And behold, the men which were sent

from Cornelius had made inquiry for the house, and stood at the gate asking for Peter. The Holy Spirit commanded him to go with them, *doubting nothing*. He went, and after two days journeying they entered the house of Cornelius. At Peter's desire, Cornelius told the cause of his sending for him. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in *every nation* he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." (verses 34—37.) Observe this remarkable language. He does not say *shall be* accepted, because he feareth God and worketh righteousness; but he *is* accepted—δεκτὸς ἐστι. He is already accepted, or he could not work righteousness. His devout mind and righteous conduct were the happy results of his acceptance and communion with God; the blessed character for the formation of which in man, acceptance and communion with God, are graciously vouchsafed in the Gospel, and are indispensable.

But how was Cornelius accepted? Through the knowledge of the Gospel. But did he know the Gospel before Peter went to him? Yes. The Apostle distinctly says so; (verses 36, 37;) this, I repeat, is of the utmost importance. Had this been attended to as it deserves, it would have prevented many speculations concerning natural religion and congruity for grace, of which the case of Cornelius is quoted as scriptural authority, and a scriptural specimen.

If to this view of his case it be objected, to what

end then was Peter sent unto him? He was a spiritual Christian already. He knew the Gospel, believed it, was accepted of God, was sanctified, and living a godly life; what more was, or could have been required? We answer, two things were to be accomplished by this mission. The first and chief was, that by the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles, in the presence of the Apostle and other Jews, Jewish prejudice was to be broken down. This object was attained, as will be perceived by considering the fact as stated at verse 44, and the use which Peter afterwards made of this fact.

The whole transaction was soon known in Judea among the Apostles and brethren; and their prejudice upon the subject was so strong, that when Peter returned to Jerusalem, it formed a ground of accusation against him. (Chap. xi. 1, 2, 3,) Peter, in his defence, rehearsed the matter from the beginning, declaring in order all the circumstances connected with the vision. From verses 15—17, it is obvious that he grounds his defence mainly on the fact of the Holy Ghost having descended upon the Gentiles. And from verse 18, it is obvious that because of this fact, his defence was received as complete; and the great object gained of a public acknowledgment by the Apostles and assembled brethren, that God had extended his salvation among the Gentiles.

Another object was gained by this mission of the Apostle. When Cornelius was desired to send for

Peter, he was informed that Peter would tell him what he ought to do. (Chap. x. 6.) Spiritual Christian though he was, there was still a commandment of the Lord with which he had not complied. Peter went to him, and preached to him. But in Peter's preaching we find no commandment of anything that Cornelius was to do. The Apostle preached historically concerning Jesus of Nazareth. (Verses 38—43.) But when he saw that the Holy Ghost had come upon Cornelius and his household, then he gave commandment what they should do. "He commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord." (Verse 48.)

The case of Cornelius, fairly considered, does not affect, does not indeed apply directly to, the question now under examination.

I conclude, then, concerning the power by which holiness is produced in the church of God, that every member of that church is created anew, by the sovereign energy of the Holy Spirit, in the image of him that created him. (Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 23, 24.) The Holy Spirit is in him, and dwells in him, and leads him. The Holy Spirit prays in him with strivings of inward earnestness, with breathings and groanings, which baffle human language to give them utterance. (St. John xiv. 17; Rom. viii. 14, 26, 27.) The Holy Spirit repents in him, and watches in him, and quickens him, and maintains his conflict against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and encourages him, and comforts him, and never leaves him nor forsakes him. (2 Cor. i. 21, 22, and v. 5; 1 John ii.

27.) This is the living power by which holiness is produced in every member of the church of God in Christ.

III. The next and truly interesting inquiry is, by what means this power is ordinarily exercised? Ordinarily, because there may be, as there have been, exceptions; God is not limited or confined even to his own appointed ordinances among men. But generally the sword of the Spirit, the grand instrument used, is the word of God.

For the new birth of the members of the church the word is the seed. They are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man," in his pride and pomp, his eloquence and philosophy, "as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you." (1 Pet. i. 23—25.) "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (St. James i. 22.)

For their growth towards the measure of the stature of Christ, the word of God is the milk. "Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.)

For their guidance through the bewildering ways of a sinful world, they may each say with the

Psalmist, " Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The entrance of thy words giveth light : it giveth understanding unto the simple. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Ps. cxix.)

For their general sanctification, the word of God is the instrument, according to the prayer of the Great Intercessor. " Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth." (St. John xvii. 17.)

When St. Paul describes the great purpose of the Redeemer concerning his church which he loved, and for which he gave himself, it is, " That he might sanctify and cleanse it," as it were, " by the washing of water," that is, " *by the word ;* that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25—27.)

And when our great Example met and repelled the temptations of the devil, he appealed at every step to *the word of God*, saying, " It is written." When Satan attempted to meet him on this ground, and made his appeal also to the word of God, Jesus was not to be turned from the use of the sacred word by the devil's abuse of it ; neither did he deem it needful to point out the mutilation of the text of the psalm in which that abuse consisted,* but simply answered, " It is written again." (St. Matt. iv. 1—11.)

* Ps. xci. 11, comp. St. Matt. iv. 6. Satan omitted the clause, " In all thy ways."

At the fourth verse of this wonderful narrative, our Lord cited from Moses a general principle of most important application. "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." *Every* word! By this expression our attention is called to the comprehensiveness of the Scriptures for the attainment of their great design, and to the duty of making our appeal to them without partiality, as well as without hypocrisy. (St. James iii. 17.) The word of God contains every topic necessary for producing sanctifying effects upon the members of the church of God, or as St. Peter expresses it, "All things that pertain to life and godliness." (2 Pet. i. 3.) The natural characters and besetting tendencies of real Christians differ exceedingly one from another; and the states of mind of the same individual Christians are very different at different times. For all this variety the word of God provides. It is indeed to meet this variety that the provisions of the word are so diverse and so comprehensive; and it is by confining his attention to one, or at the most, to only a few of these varieties, that the expositor betrays his narrowness of mind, looking at his own experience as a sample of all, instead of a unit among many; and so placing himself in an antipodes' position against another expositor equally sincere, but equally narrow, and partial, at some other favourite point. The catholicity of the word of God puts all such ex parte expositions to shame.

Addressed to the highest aspirations of grateful love, in the members of the church, towards Him who first loved them, the *word of blessing*, rich, free, everlasting blessing in Christ Jesus, is reiterated as supplying the most urgent motives to holiness. But is this all? Do we represent this as inclusive of *every* word? Do we, who delight in this, confine ourselves to this? By no means.

Addressed to the desire for instruction in the details of duty in the church of God, the *word of practical guidance* unfolds its store of descriptions and commands concerning tempers, and words, and conduct, personal and relative.

Addressed to the lower feelings of selfishness and terror, which are still found in some members of the church frequently, and in others occasionally, the *word of warning* raises its appalling sounds against apostacy with all its dreadful consequences.

Addressed to the panting anticipations of hope which form so strong a feature in the christian character, and are kept in vigorous action by the great truth of the approaching advent of our Lord and Saviour, the *word of judgment according to works*, and the word of *reward for works*, exercise their animating influence.

And thus the round of the church's experience, taken in its fulness, supplies an interesting comment on the saying of the Lord Jesus, that man *lives*, in the highest sense of that expression, by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

(1.) *The word of blessing* proclaims the characteristic glad tidings of the everlasting Gospel, preaching pardon and peace by Jesus Christ; and the immediate influence ascribed to this, wherever the statements are cordially received, is holiness. The love of God is planted in the heart, and fruits of righteousness are the appropriate produce. This is the prescription of the Great Physician for the disease of our nature. In various ways a man may be made conscious of his disease, but only in one way can it be cured. Nothing but pardoning love from God can reach the real seat of it. The disease is sin, not only in its guilt against the divine law, but also in its effects upon the human conscience. In its guilt, it exposes a man to the righteous anger of God; in its effects upon the human conscience, it produces in a man alienation from God, as well as self-reproach. How then is this to be dealt with in the way of moral instrumentality? The holiness of the law, the majesty of the lawgiver, the dreadful consequences of continued disobedience—all these serve but to aggravate the disease. This is their proper use; to exhibit it in its true light, till it shall become intolerable, "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.) But they supply no cure, no balm to heal. And yet, till the disease is healed, there can be no *true* obedience. There may indeed be compliance with many of the outward duties of the second table of the law, but the first and greatest commandment of all is absolutely im-

practicable. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. Alas! the heart recoils in alienation and enmity as from a taskmaster; and all his majesty and power, and rightful authority, serve but to repel it more and more. What can attract it? Only pardoning love, which makes provision for the depth of its necessity; and this is precisely the announcement of the Gospel, in its word of blessing. It proclaims love, that it may produce love; love from heaven to beget love on earth, pardoning love to raise the holy echo of grateful love. "Thy sins be forgiven thee." One owed fifty pence, another five hundred, and when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both." Be it known to you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. (Acts. xiii. 38.)

This proclamation is so made, as to show it in strictest harmony with the holy character of God, and the hateful character of sin. God is just, and the justifier of the ungodly. The great object of the church's faith is, at the same time, the great manifestation of God's inexorable justice, and of God's pardoning love. It is Jesus Christ, Jesus crucified, "The just for the unjust, to bring us to God;" i. e. to love, to law, to holiness, to happiness.

This meets the necessity of the case, pours balm into the very seat of the disease, and thus changes the nature of the tree, in order that in consequence

of such change, the nature of the fruit may be changed also.

The divine Husbandman himself has adopted this figure, which, if it be appropriate at all, (and who will deny this ?) must be fundamentally instructive, and ought in fairness to be decisive of this branch of the controversy. "Make the tree good, and his fruit good." "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (St. Matt. vii. 16, 17, 18.) He compares a man to a tree, and his works to the fruit. By nature both are corrupt. In the process of renewal, which of these must have the precedence? Not the fruit, but the tree; not the works, but the man. And can the process stop at the first step? When the tree is made good, can the fruit remain evil? Not so. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." How fully armed is this beautiful figure against the corrupt system on either side; either the "congruity" which represents a man's Christianity as consequent upon his good works, or the Antinomianism which represents a man's Christianity as unproductive of good works!

The word of blessing is specially and copiously applied for the production of such good works. Having in his Epistle to the Romans displayed in glowing colours the unsearchable riches of the everlasting Gospel of the grace of God, St. Paul draws, as a concentrated consequence from them all, an animating exhortation to universal devotedness.

" I beseech you, *therefore*, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 1, 2.)

Having in his second Epistle to the Corinthians cited some of God's gracious promises to the members of his church, to dwell in them, and walk in them, and be a father unto them, he adds, " Having, *therefore*, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

And when he urges the members of the church in Ephesus to the practice of brotherly love, especially in the matter of mutual forgiveness; he derives the constraining motive for this conduct from the blessings of forgiveness which God had already mercifully and freely bestowed on them, and from the high and precious dignity of being imitators of good. " And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye *therefore* followers of God, as dear children." (Ephes. iv. 2; and v. 1.)

It was by a pressure on the same principle, derived from blessings mercifully and freely conferred upon them, that the members of the church of God, under the Jewish dispensation, were urged to holy

obedience. The cv. and cvi. psalms supply an interesting instance of this. In all the wonders graciously wrought for Israel in Egypt, in their deliverance out of Egypt, and in the wilderness, the object in view was, "That they might observe his statutes and keep his laws."

That blessings bestowed should thus instrumentally produce such characteristic results, it is indispensable that the receivers of them should know that they have received them. Thus the Apostle speaks: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*" The things here spoken of are not the things of a future world, as yet unrevealed; they are the things of present christian experience, revealed by the Spirit. Man then in this passage is man untaught by the Spirit of God. He indeed cannot imagine these things. However furnished with information on other subjects, and qualified for high attainments, he can make no progress here. These things are not matters of natural intellect, but of spiritual discernment, and the Apostle asserts with unambiguous plainness, that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we

have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, *that we might know* the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9—14.) " And we have *known* and *believed* the love that God hath to us." " Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John iv. 16, 13.) " And we *know* that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we *may know* him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (Ib. v. 20.) " Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. And having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full *assurance of faith.* (Heb. x. 19, 20, 21, 22.)

Mr. Ward, indeed, denounces the doctrine of assurance as a heresy, and decides dogmatically that its effects, wherever it is received, must be unholy. But perhaps this only proves that he has never himself enjoyed the blessing experimentally, and that his theory of Christianity, as well as his ideal of a church, has been derived from " Catholic authors," and not from the word of God.

But the word of blessing does not stand alone, for the formation of the christian character. Many members of the church of God, perhaps all of them at some time, require a different treatment; and it is at hand.

(2.) *The word of practical guidance* unfolds its stores of descriptions and commands concerning tempers, and words, and works. The Christian is not left in this perplexing world without a guide to direct his steps. Richly supplied and clothed for his heavenward journey, he is not left in doubt as to the way in which he should walk. No, truly. This would be to expose him to unconscious wanderings in a strange country, and among crossing roads, where, with the best intentions to reach his holy home, he might be drawn aside unwittingly by the delusions of a wily and powerful adversary.

To his desire for instruction in the details of duty, the word of God responds with great plainness of speech. And here I will take the liberty to quote from a sermon of my own, printed in 1825, on the application of the moral law as a rule for the Christian's life.

" If any man dispute this, and deny any such application of the law to the Christian, because that Christ hath fulfilled the law for him, and he is completely delivered from the law, as a covenant of works; let such a man remember that Christ in his life hath set us an example, that we should follow his steps, and let him ask himself whither do the steps of Christ lead, but among the precepts of the law? What was the life of Christ, but one undeviating conformity to the whole law? If, then, the example of Christ be the rule of a Christian's life, so must the moral law be also; for we challenge any man to point out the smallest discrepancy be-

tween the life of Christ and the law of God. "In him was no sin;" but sin is the transgression of the law, therefore he never transgressed the law; and they who would follow his steps must be guided by the precepts of the law. These precepts the Apostles press upon their converts; they wear indeed a more attractive dress in the apostolical epistles, than in the books of Moses; under the genial influence of the Gospel sun they bloom as the fruits of the Spirit, but in substance they are still the precepts of the law. Let the mind, therefore, and manners, and conversation, be in you, my beloved brethren, which were also in Christ Jesus; and if any man among you object to this application of the law to the believer's life, only let that man be diligent and successful in cultivating the fruits of the Spirit as enumerated in the Gospel, and we shall presently find him obeying, without intending it, the holy precepts of the moral law. We are not contending for any *merit* in this observance of the law, either to recommend the sinner to Christ, or in conjunction with the righteousness of Christ, to recommend the sinner to God. Such views we cordially disclaim, and we sincerely grieve over that inveterate and pernicious pride which mars by such views the free beauty of the Gospel. But we earnestly contend for the inestimable blessing of holiness in heart and life, which is conferred upon every true Christian, and which manifests itself in a growing conformity to the holy law of God, or (what is the same thing) to the holy example of Jesus Christ."

"Thankfulness and diligence, and humbleness of mind, are the genuine characteristics of the true Christian, and in the exercise of all these there is a direct reference to the law.

"(1.) The law proves an occasion of *thankfulness* to the Christian, because it shows him—nothing else can show him—the extent of the ruin in which he was involved, and the exceeding difficulty of the task which Christ undertook to perform in his stead. No created arm could have wrought that mighty work which caused even the everlasting Son of the most high God to shrink and tremble, and cry out in agony under the inconceivable weight that pressed upon him, when it pleased the Father to vindicate the sanctions of his most holy law, by bruising his well-beloved Son. And as the law thus shows the difficulty of the performance, so also it points out the perfection of its accomplishment. Had Christ left one single precept of the law for the sinner to fulfil *as a condition*, all the rest would have been kept in vain, that one violated precept (according to the tenor of the covenant of works) would have been sufficient to sink the soul into everlasting ruin. But he kept it all; he finished his righteous work: he redeemed his people, from what? From the curse. What curse? The curse *of the law*. And in proportion as by looking into that law they obtain clearer views of the fearfulness of that curse, they shall have a more adequate sense of the magnitude of the blessing bestowed upon them, which

is the mainspring of all their grateful thanksgiving. 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me?' 'Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?'

"(2.) Thus *diligence* springs up in the believer, as the legitimate fruit of this thankfulness of spirit. Am I indeed rescued from so dreadful a condemnation? Am I indeed saved at so great a price? 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And in answer to this gracious inquiry, the law (and nothing else) points out the nature, and supplies the measure of the obedience which God enjoins. The Old Testament, and the New, speak here with one voice; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; and thou shalt love thy Father who is in heaven with all thy heart and mind, and soul and strength.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; neither shalt thou swear at all by any oath; but be content with a simple assertion or denial, let your yea be yea, and your nay nay; for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil. Remember the sabbath of the Lord thy God to keep it holy, calling it a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, but giving thyself up to the service of the

Lord thy God. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise. Thou shalt not kill, no, nor be angry with any man. Thou shalt not commit adultery, nor look upon a woman to lust after her. Thou shalt not steal, nor covet anything belonging to any man; neither shalt thou go beyond, nor defraud thy brother in any transaction. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour, nor circulate, nor rejoice in, nor exaggerate evil reports; neither shalt thou attempt to justify thyself in any of these, by pleading provocation, for thou shalt not retaliate, nor return evil for evil in anywise, but rather overcome evil with good. Owe no man anything but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For these commandments above enumerated, and if there be any other commandment of the second table, all are briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. This is the lawful use of the law as the guide and measure of the Christian's diligence.

"(3.) And the standard thus set up, when faithfully contemplated, proves an occasion for abundant *humbleness* of mind.

" Seeing we are still so far, so very far from that holy height; seeing that with all our striving to obey, we are still living in too frequent disobedience; that with all our earnest anxiety to avoid sin, there is still sin in everything we do; not only in our worldly transactions, but peculiarly in our prayers, and our reading, and our attendance upon divine worship; such impatience of temper, such wandering of thought and affections, such forgetfulness and ingratitude, that we may well adopt the language of the Apostle labouring under the pressure of the same painful conflict. 'We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' This is what causes the Christian's instinctive breathing, pardoned though he be, and though he knows it, to echo and re-echo the prayer of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" *

Call this an inconsistency if you will; it may be so in logic, or in cold metaphysics: but it is the warm flow of the very life-blood of experimental Christianity, "which passeth all understanding."

And more particularly, see how, in such a passage as Ephesians iv. 25—32, the word of God by the Apostle inculcates on the members of the church, truth, zeal with self-command, honesty, diligence, delicacy of language, watchfulness not to grieve in anything the Holy Spirit of God, and all christian tempers: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak

* Sermon *On the lawful use of the Law.*

every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands, the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God; whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Similar is that specifying exhortation to the Colossians iii. 12, 13, "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering. Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Subdued under a deep conviction of his own manifold faults and provocations, and sustained by a conviction equally deep of God's free forgiveness of all his sins; the tried member of the church of God is qualified to bear long and patiently with the faults and provocations of others. The word of God is voluminous on this

point, in a variety of aspects. Solomon says, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (Prov. xiv. 29.) And "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment, for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again." (Prov. xix. 19.) And our Lord, in his sermon on the mount, supposes three extreme cases of provocation, and inculcates in each the very extreme of forbearance: 1. A personal assault, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." 2. An aggression upon property. "And if any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." 3. An intrusion on time and convenience. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (St. Matt. v. 39—41.)

But neither does this gentle dealing stand alone in the word of God for the formation of the holy character of the church. Some members of the church, though truly sincere, are composed of less generous materials; and others, though susceptible at some times of the tenderest emotions of grateful love, are at other times not so. Selfish fear must be addressed for their merciful preservation; and

(3.) The word of warning sounds its terrible alarm. It comes, indeed, with an IF; an IF which unconverted nature disregards, and sins on, reckless of eternity; but which carries a startling and restoring emotion to the Christian's heart in the hour of need. "For it is impossible for those who were once en-

lightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 4—8.) True, it is hypothetical; true, the Apostle softens it in what follows so as to call attention to its hypothetical form and meaning, (ver. 9,) "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." True, it may be applied, and perhaps properly, (though I think, if such an application be rested on, as the only one of this passage, it would amount to a practical evasion, as obsolete, of a word which, like every word of God, liveth and abideth for ever,) to those who in the apostolic times had the miraculous teaching and the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost, but who were really not converted to God. True, assurances that the members of the church of God shall not fall away are given frequently and absolutely, without any hypothesis; still the implication of even the possibility that such an one may fall away, has its place, its legitimate, its indispensa-

ble place, in the provision which He who knows what is in all men, has made in his word for the holiness of the church. And many (who shall estimate how many?) members of that church shall give thanks to God throughout eternity for the salutary fear and penitent trembling whereby they have been seized at some critical moment or moments of their lives, by hearing, or reading, or remembering such a passage as this—

"For IF we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 26, 31.)

Again, the language is hypothetical, and therefore not in verbal contradiction to the strongest and most positive assurances of the church's security.

Doubtless, also, this passage referred primarily to those Hebrews who, after joining the primitive church, were deterred by the persecutions to which that church was exposed, and tempted to go back to Judaism under the notion that the Jewish sacrifices would still be available for their forgiveness, as they had been for their forefathers; and that thus they might retain the benefit of shedding of blood for the remission of sin, which they knew to be a truth; and at the same time escape the exposure to present danger by retiring from their christian profession. To such the Apostle says, that if they so wilfully sin,

there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, Judeism is now a dead letter, instead of a living type Still this does not exhaust the meaning or application of these words; it liveth and abideth for ever, and O! how solemn it is, how awfully solemn: how well calculated to silence the superficial chatterings of unconcerned professors, and to harrow up the lower, more personal, and selfish feelings of the Christian, who, for the time being, has declined from the holy self-forgetting attraction of the love of Jesus!

Again the word of warning speaks: "For IF after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 20—22.)

Some reader of these pages may at this point be brought into secret experimental conflict with some besetting sin pleading deceitfully for indulgence; and while these words swim before his eyes, he may be inwardly engaged in an agitating struggle between a rising christian resolve against, and a lingering extenuation in favour of, his darling lust.

The writer can only pray, and entreat his readers who through grace have overcome in such conflicts, to join him in prayer, that a tempted brother may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph over all those evils, and instigations to evil, which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man worketh against him.

(4.) But further, there is *a word of judgment*, addressed to the sense of retribution which is in man, and *a word of reward*, addressed to the anticipations of hope.

These great truths do not rest upon an isolated text or two. It is the habit of Scripture to speak of a judgment according to works on both sides, and a varying reward for works among the heirs of the kingdom. "Ah, Lord God! behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is his name. Great in counsel and mighty in work, for thine eyes are open upon the ways of the sons of men, *to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*" (Jer. xxxii. 17—19.) "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath

done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) "And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and *I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*" (Rev. ii. 23.) And I saw the dead small and great stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books *according to their works.*" (Rev. xx. 12.) "And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be.*" (xxii. 12.)

This may suffice for the nature of the judgment, that it will take its course, according to the nature of men's works. We have already seen how *good* works are produced in men.

But more particularly, as to the varying rewards among those who have been made good. St. Paul declares it expressly in speaking of himself and Apollos. Both were on the Lord's side. Both were engaged in the ministry of the Gospel, the one planted, the other watered, and the Apostle adds, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one." "*And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.*" (1 Cor. iii. 8.) All who are indeed and in truth labouring for God shall be rewarded, but not equally, it appears, unless their labours be equal.

The beloved disciple, in his second epistle to the elect lady and her children, uses language which would be inexplicable but for this truth: "Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive *a full reward*." (2 John 8.)

Our Lord, also, in his instructions to his disciples, obviously inculcates the same. His words are attended with some difficulty, and will repay a somewhat more detailed attention. He sent forth the twelve on a high and glorious mission; he invested them with wonderful powers and privileges; he apprized them of imminent dangers; and he encouraged them and all who would favour them, with gracious promises. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (St. Matt. x. 34—36.)

The case of the disciples seemed to be indeed evil when thus exposed. Who would receive them, who would admit them into their houses, when such contentions were to be the consequences? In order to secure them a reception, the Lord adds, ver. 40, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." And then, in application to their followers in the ministry, he adds, ver. 41, "He that receiveth a prophet in

the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." And to all his people he adds, verses 41, 42, "And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in nowise lose his reward."

Acts of christian kindness vary in their degrees of excellence, in proportion as they approach the person of Christ, who is their genuine object, and as they more largely partake of the love of Christ, which is the genuine principle of all christian kindness. In the words now under our consideration, we have four classes of such acts enumerated and distinguished from each other by the several and distinct promises made to them. The first is that of receiving the Apostles, which, under all the circumstances of the case, required a bold and decided confession of Christ before men. So decided was this, that receiving them is declared to be the same as receiving him, as receiving him is the same as receiving God, who sent him. The second is receiving a *prophet.* The third is receiving *a righteous man.* The fourth is giving any relief, even a cup of water, to one of the least of Christ's disciples. The persons mentioned are of four sorts: apostles, prophets, righteous men, and little ones.

The Apostles, upon the death of Jesus, succeeded to the government and direction of the church.

Under them were placed teachers and pastors of different orders, who are comprehended under the general name of prophets. The two next characters belong to the flock of Christ, and are distinguished from one another only by their christian progress. We read of babes in Christ, and of young men, and of fathers. (1 John ii.) By the *righteous man*, I understand the advanced Christian whose more matured character and decisive testimony for Christ would render an open reception of him more difficult to flesh and blood, and therefore more honourable to his divine Master. By the little ones, I understand the babes in Christ, who being as yet undecided and timid, and not having drawn the attention of men to them as Christians, might be received without incurring much reproach; but if required for Christ's sake, such an act of kindness to them should by no means lose its reward.

To receive a prophet in the name of a prophet is to receive him *because he is a prophet;* not because he is our relation or friend, not because he is agreeable or clever, but because of his character and office, and the relation he thus bears to Christ. In like manner, to receive a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, is to receive him because he is a Christian; not because of his natural qualities or relationship, but because of his spiritual relationship in Christ. So also to give a cup of cold water to one of the little ones in the name of a disciple, is to do it because of that little one's discipleship,

not because of their natural want or their natural attachment to us, or anything natural, but because they are members of Christ.

To these several acts of christian kindness are graciously promised several degrees of christian reward. And there is a beautiful appropriateness in the distribution.

He that receiveth, lodgeth, supplieth a prophet because he is a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward, and most appropriately, for he in fact performs a prophet's duty. By enabling the prophet to do the work of his high calling, he becomes the doer of it. By feeding the mouth that preaches, he himself preaches.

The same line of reasoning will apply to all the other instances following. It is as if Jesus had said to the twelve, I am come to send a sword upon the earth; you shall carry that sword far and wide; you shall be hated for my name's sake; but hold on, and hold fast, bear your cross and follow me, I have a people in the world, and they will receive you. To receive you will be to declare war with the world, it will be to risk a man's life, it will be to receive me as you have done, and they who do it shall receive me, *i. e.* they who receive an Apostle shall receive an Apostle's reward. To receive any of your faithful successors in the ministry, will be a trial of the attachment of men to me; whosoever does it will show the same love to me that the prophet himself shows; therefore whosoever does it

shall receive a prophet's reward. To receive a righteous man a believer in your doctrine, will be to profess attachment to me similar to that of the righteous man himself: therefore whosoever does it shall receive a righteous man's reward. To receive any disciple of mine, the most timid, will evince some attachment to me, and therefore whosoever does it shall have his reward, whatever it may be, according to what he hath done.

I am aware that many truly devoted members of the church of God feel a strong repugnance to the anticipation of any reward, conscious as they are that their best doings are not good; but that, on the contrary, as Bishop Beverigde has expressed it, "Their repentance needs to be repented of, and their tears to be washed in the blood of the Lamb;" yet surely if the Lord himself, who is the judge, and who knows best, has condescended to call the services of his faithful people good, if he has represented himself as receiving such a one with the cheering welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" if he has been pleased to promise rewards for such services, and varying rewards to every faithful servant according as his work shall be; if this be so indeed, (and how can it be gainsayed?) then, is it not an affectation of humility (under whatever subtle disguise it may present itself) in any man, who has the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity he is serving God, not to an anticipate a reward, and not to allow the

anticipation to form one ingredient in the mysterious system of motives by which he is actuated?

To say that love to Christ is a constraining motive to holy obedience, is to say truly. To say that it is *the most* constraining of all motives, is, I think, equally true, and by most members of the church of God it is felt to be so; but to say that it is *the only* motive, is surely to charge (however unintentionally) upon Him who has addressed other motives in us, a work of needless supererogation in inditing his holy Scriptures. For why does he promise a reward, if we are not to expect it? Is all he has said upon the subject a mere flourish, devoid of meaning? Or has he said it to us, without intending that we should attach any meaning to it? And if we do attach a meaning to it, and really expect him to be as good as his word, (not because we deserve it, but because he has been pleased to say it,) how is it possible that such expectation should fail to mingle in our motives for action? Surely there is an essential difference between *the foundation* on which all blessings from God to fallen man rest; and *the measure* in which those blessings shall be distributed. Surely there is an essential difference between *the union* of a member in the body of Christ, and *the station* in the body to be occupied by that member. All the members are in the body, but are all shoulders? or are all hands? The church is the body of Christ, and the individuals composing it are members in particular, (1 Cor. xii. 27,) each to occupy his own

place, and perform his own functions, for ever and ever. And what if the Lord the Head has plainly declared that the station which each shall occupy in his body glorified; shall bear a recognised proportion to the service of each in his body militant? of the service he alone is the judge, and he is perfectly cognizant of all the opportunities and lack of opportunities, of all the helps and all the hindrances, which each member has experienced during the entire of his spiritual warfare. He knows also how to enter experimentally into their struggles, because he looks on, not as a stranger in a cold theory of sympathy, but as a fellow struggler who has toiled on the same road, who has suffered being tempted, and who is touched with a feeling of every infirmity of every member: and for this gracious reason among others, is all judgment committed to him, because he is the Son of *man*. (Heb. ii. 18, and iv. 15; St. John v. 27.)

Thus taking into consideration *all* holy scripture as it is given by inspiration of God, and all the varieties of constitutional character and feeling and experience presented by the church of God; it is on his sacred word, blessing, guiding, warning, promising, all of it, rendered effectual by the promised teaching and influences of the Holy Spirit, that we rely for the production of holiness, in principle and practice, in the members of His church. We believe that the manifestations of such holiness will vary as individuals vary in outward appearance as well as in inward dis-

position. We do not dare, we would not wish, to attain uniformity of manifestation; an automaton holiness, by an artificial discipline, a sort of Procrustes bed, to the dimensions of which the short must be stretched, and the long crippled or amputated. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," (2 Cor. iii. 17,) and therefore we repudiate all such ecclesiastical drills as are now gravely commended to our approbation. Independent of what we are deeply convinced to be the falsehood and idolatry involved in some of them,* we reject the drill as such; because however valuable, or even indispensable, such

* "To give this inquiry all the force of a practical comparison, I will append an account sent me for publication by the superior of a priest's seminary in France, who is describing a system of which he has had for years the personal cognizance and direction. It must be acknowledged, I think, that priests so trained are likely to enter on their ministrations with no very inadequate conception of the primary necessity of spiritual discipline, and no very inadequate power of understanding and sympathizing with the spiritual difficulties and distresses of the humblest of the flock.

"In order to form our candidates for the priesthood to the holiness necessary to the state of life for which they are destined, the rule prescribes the following methods:

1. "Vocal prayer at half past five in the morning. It is short, and proceeds as follows: 1. The student puts himself in the presence of God, by a special act of faith in the truth of his universal presence and adores him. 2. He thanks God for the gift of the day, thus beginning, and consecrates to him, all his actions, promising to do them all in imitation of him. 3. He recites in the ecclesiastical language, the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo. 4. He commends himself to the Blessed

treatment may be to prepare soldiers for this world, (unthinking machines to move in masses at the word of the commanding officer,) it can never prepare men for that "reasonable service" to which the soldiers of Jesus Christ are called. It is consummate policy in those who wish to make the church appear co-extensive with the community; that is, to appear what it is not, and what it can never be,

Virgin, to his patron Saint, to his guardian Angel, that they may watch over and protect him during the day, and by their prayers obtain for him the grace of which he has need. The whole concludes with acts of faith, hope and charity, of contrition and renewal of baptismal promises." *Ward's Ideal, &c.*, pp. 317, 318.

Then follow similar directions, under the heads ii. Mental prayer, or meditation: iii. The holy sacrifice of the Mass: iv. Holy Scripture: v. Spiritual reading: vi. Examination of conscience: vii. Visit to the Holy Sacrament: viii. Spiritual conference: ix. The Chapel: x. Evening Prayer: xi. Studies, lectures (classes) and meals are begun and concluded with prayer. Also in the morning, at midday, and in the evening, the prayer called the Angelus is recited and this is done to pay honour to the mysteries of the Annunciation and Incarnation: xii. Confession: xiii. Holy Communion: xiv. The Monitor: xv. The spiritual director: xvi. The relations with the superior: xvii. The retreat: xviii. The vacation"—all tending to fix attention on the routine itself, rather than on any object in view by it: or more properly speaking, to make the recurring regularity of the routine its own object, and thus to emulate the scrupulous punctiliousness of those ancient devotees concerning whom the Lord said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" (St. Matt. xv. 8. 9.)

until by some competent authority, a large portion of the New Testament shall be pronounced obsolete.*

* On this point proofs may be multiplied from the experience, the number, and the character of the true members of the true Church of God, as largely described in the New Testament.

"Concerning the *experience* of true Christians under this dispensation, we read that 'all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' (2 Tim. iii. 12.) 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.' (St. Matt. v. 2.) 'If ye were of the world the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' (St. John xv. 19.) 'Suppose ye that I am come to send peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three,' (St. Luke xii. 51—53,) &c. &c. 'And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.' (St. Matt. x. 36.)

"Concerning the *number* of true believers we read Matt. xxii. 14, 'Many are called but few are chosen.' Matt. vii. 13, 14, 24, 22, 23, 'Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, *and few there be that find it*. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. *Many* will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.'

Concerning the *character* of true believers, we read, 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

But for those who are more concerned about realities than appearances, this mode of treatment possesses no charms.

James iv. 4, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world he is the enemy of God.' 2 Cor. vi. 17, 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord.' 'And I beseech you by the mercies of God,' saith the Apostle, 'that ye be not conformed to this world.' (Rom. xii. 1, 2.)

"These passages of scripture avowedly belong to this dispensation. They have applied in every age, and do still apply to the true disciples of the Lord Jesus. On the supposition that we have rightly interpreted thelanguage of St. James, at the council of Jerusalem, and that the design of this dispensation is *to take* a people *out* of the Gentiles; these Scriptures will continue to apply till the end of this dispensation; but on the supposition, that the dispensation is to enlarge itself by degrees into the universal blessedness predicted by the prophets, then these scriptures will not continue to apply. And who is to determine at what point of the progress they cease to be applicable? If the world become Christian, the world will no longer persecute Christians. If all the families of the earth be blessed with eternal life, the way of life will be no longer narrow. If the world become Christian, then Christians cannot separate from the world. It is obvious, that in the transition from our present state to a state of universal holiness, these characteristic sayings of the New Testament must cease to have any application, and become obsolete, not to say false. And again, I ask who is to determine at what point of the progress they cease to apply? If it be answered, when the more favourable circumstances of the church cease to require them, the question recurs, who is to judge of those circumstances? Some persons in this country think that already *true* religion is not thus exposed to hatred and enmity; but only extravagance and enthusiasm, provoking a cross for themselves;

God loveth a cheerful worshipper, as well as a cheerful giver, and the children of God are bound by the strongest ties, to stand fast in the holy liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and not to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage. (Gal. v. 1.) It is their privilege to *sing* unto the Lord, and heartily to rejoice in the strength of their salvation: to rejoice in the Lord always, again saith the Apostle, to rejoice: to sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving. Praise is comely. It is a good thing to give thanks; to make our boast in the Lord; and say, If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge

while others consider such an opinion as a proof that those who hold it are themselves ignorant of what true religion is. We maintain therefore that as the statutes of the book of Leviticus continued binding until another plain and direct communication from the God who gave them shewed that they were superseded, and a better order of things introduced; so these scriptures, describing the experience, the number and the character of the Lord's people under this dispensation, must continue applicable, till another plain and direct communication from Him who gave them shall shew that they are superseded, and a still better order of things introduced. This communication we expect at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, consequently, we conclude that we have no reason to expect until the coming of the Lord, any such change in the aspect of the Church as would falsify or neutralize these statements of the New Testament."

The Author's Lectures on the Prophecies.

of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? I will work, and who shall let it? saith Jehovah of hosts. It is Christ the crucified, the risen, that ever liveth to make intercession for us; who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Thus saith the Lord, the eternal Word, the first-born of every creature, the head of his body the church, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee:" "I will not turn away from thee to do thee good; and I will put my Spirit in your hearts, that you shall not depart from me."

And thus, in sweetest harmony, responds the Church, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

IV. I proceed now to consider the nature and amount of the holiness, which we have scriptural reason to expect in the members of the Church of God, while here in earth.

As a general answer to this inquiry, and for the purpose of giving order to a more particular examination into it, I state these three characteristics of Christian holiness. It is,

(1.) Habitually sincere,

(2.) Upon the whole progressive,

(3.) At the best imperfect.

(1.) Habitually sincere. The descriptions given by the Apostle Paul, and by the Psalmist, of their own habitual state of mind with reference to the great standard of holiness, the law of God, are to be considered, not as of private or personal exclusiveness, but as of general and transferable application. They express the deliberate convictions, and conscientious preferences of all the true members of that body, or church, to which they themselves belonged. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "With the mind I myself serve the law of God." (Rom. vii. 21, 25.) "O! how I love thy law!" I love thy commandments above gold, yea above fine gold. "I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." (Psalm cxix.)

It is not alleged that all the true members of the church of Christ are always in this state of mind, without variation and without interruption. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" But I do think the passages here cited are accurately descriptive of the habitual state of mind, as to his conscious preference, of every real Christian. It is with reference to this habit of mind, and not with reference to some occasional act

or temper, that the beloved disciple writes, when he says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) These remarkable words, if taken absolutely, would contradict expressly, not only other passages of scripture, but also the facts of the case as recorded in the histories of even the Apostles themselves. Tried by such a standard, neither James nor John, neither Paul nor Peter, could be pronounced to be "born of God." But the words, however taken, cannot in fairness be understood to mean less than habitual sincerity of purpose, effectually excluding any harboured, deliberate, and continued course of evil.

Whatever subtlety some besetting temptation may for a time possess, ensnaring the real Christian into even *an intention* to sin, it can be but for a time, as a passing cloud. A continued habitual intention to sin is absolutely incompatible with true religion. No member of Christ's body can live in it.

This has been illustrated simply and well, by the possibility of a man falling into the water, and the impossibility of his living under the water. To be thrown into the water suddenly, unintentionally, reluctantly; nay, in a moment of excitement wilfully to leap into the water; nay, in an hour of delusion, deliberately to plan and execute a fall into the water; all these are compatible with human life: the man may arise again out of the water, and alive. But, in

whatever way he may have got in, to remain under the water is incompatible with human life: the element is too thick, the man who continues in it dies. And what water is in this respect to human life, sin is to true religion. The sincere Christian may be thrown into it, suddenly, unintentionally, reluctantly, and spring out again the next moment; or he may, as I have said, be so far beguiled as actually for a time to intend it; but owing to the new creation within him, the seed of God that has taken root in him, the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in him, it has become impossible for him to remain in it. The life given him in Christ Jesus is *eternal* life. Habitual continuance in allowed sin would destroy it; but it cannot be destroyed, the sure word of God concerning him is, "He shall not come into condemnation." (St. John v. 24.) "Sin shall not have dominion over him." (Rom. vi. 14.) Therefore he cannot continue in known sin. His holiness, however occasionally interrupted, will be habitually sincere, corresponding with that characteristic of the blessed man in the Old Testament, "In whose spirit there is no guile."

(2.) Upon the whole progressive. Whatever interruptions may occur in the holiness of the Christian, such as those now alluded to; they do not, and cannot prevent its growth upon the whole. The members of Christ, with reference to the new life of God in their souls, are compared to "babes," and the word of God is the "sincere milk," by which the

babes "grow" to be young men, and advance to the maturity of wisdom and discernment, characteristic of Fathers in Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 2; 1 John ii. 12—14.) It is not on any positive degree of attainment in his own character, such as might safely content him, without any addition to it, that the real Christian relies. His reliance is on Christ, and his desire is to be like Christ. Christ is all and in all to him; his rock from the first, his example to the last. What he is looking for is *progress.* At all stages, from the beginning, and unto the end, what he looks for, and aims at, is progress. What he is predestinated to arrive at, is conformity to God's dear Son.* To this end Christ has apprehended, or laid hold of, him; and his master object is to apprehend, or lay hold of, that for which he is apprehended of Christ.†

Here again we appeal to the example of the Apostle Paul, who in a figure transferred to himself for our sakes, (1 Cor. iv. 6,) and exhibited in the glass of his own experience, this genuine characteristic of the members of the church of God. He announces a great change which had taken place in his character and opinions. His national and hereditary privileges, his zeal for the Jews' religion, and his righteousness according to the law, on which he had before depended for salvation, or, as he expresses it, which "were gain" to him, had ceased to be so. He had given them all up, "counting them loss"

* Rom. viii. 29. † Phil. iii. 12.

for Christ. Then, not content with this description of a past change, he proceeds to express in the strongest terms, his *present* feelings, his abiding and animating desires for the time to come. "Yea, doubtless, and I count," not only I did so once, but I do still, it is my deliberate and cherished judgment and feeling. "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Then looking forward, he adds, "that I may win him," not as though I had won him, either were already found in him, but "that I may win him, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And further, I have another object in view for which I count all my former pursuits and privileges as dross; it is "that I may know Christ;" that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, "being made conformable unto his death." Not as though I did already know him, (though I do know him already well enough to prefer him above all things,) but that I may know him, "being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those

things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* What a spirit-stirring description of progress is here! yes, the Christian's tendency is forward. God said to Moses, "Say to the people that they *go forward*." Joshua, the servant of the Lord, exhorted the people saying, "There remaineth yet much land to be possessed."

Hosea the prophet says, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." (vi. 3.) "Beholding with open face as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," the true members of the church of God are progressively "changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Objections to this statement may occur to the reader's mind. It may be, as it has been, urged, that the scriptural histories of the most eminent saints are practical contradictions of such a statement. It may be asked, is not the unbelieving falsehood of Abraham a contradiction to it? the adultery of David, the vain glory of Hezekiah, the apostasy and blasphemy of Peter?

I answer, No, in no wise. There may be progress, real sound advancing progress, and still no perfection. To grow in holiness is one thing: to become incapable of any deviation into sin is quite another

* Phil. iii. 7—14.

thing. Compare a robust man of forty, with a delicate child of four years old: who can deny that the man has made progress in the power of walking beyond what the child has made? Yet he stumbled and fell yesterday, and the child walked and ran about all day without falling. Abraham stumbled and fell, yet he had made real progress in "walking with God." Again, contemplate a sick man, whose disease has relaxed every muscle and enervated every joint of his body; he cannot move his limbs, he cannot turn in his bed; he cannot feed himself: compare him with a healthy child: his limbs and joints and muscles have made great progress towards strength beyond those of the child. And yet at this moment, the child is stronger than he. David had a severe attack of spiritual sickness: the powers of his life of faith were paralysed: his watchfulness in holy devotion was gone: his resistance against sin was prostrated before the prevailing power of the temptation: yet he had, upon the whole, made great progress in spiritual life; as the depth and bitterness of his repentance afterwards, most satisfactorily prove. Once more, look up into the heavens. The sun does not shine so bright now at eleven o'clock as it did this morning at seven soon after its rise. Yet it has been making progress towards its meridian. It may be behind a cloud for a season, a deep darkening cloud, but upon the whole it makes progress. "The path of the just," of the true Christian, "is as the shining light, which shineth

more and more unto the perfect day." He may indeed be obscured for a season; and to a superficial observer, he may seem to retrograde, but upon the whole he makes progress.

After his greatest progress, however, he continues dependent: as entirely dependent on the upholding grace of God, as he was in his spiritual infancy, so that if it were possible that after many years of spiritual living, he could be entirely forsaken of the Holy Spirit, he would instantly be as carnal as if he had never been spiritual, as dead to God as if he had never been alive. Neither is there any contradiction or inconsistency in this. "The life of the flesh is in the blood." The life of the spirit is in the Holy Ghost. Let the blood (the circulation of natural life) be taken from the flesh of a man of fifty years old, and from the flesh of an infant, and both are instantly and equally dead. Yet between infancy and fifty years of age, a real bona-fide increase had taken place in the amount and power of animal life. Still after all, the holiness of the Christian in this life is

(3.) At the best imperfect.

This is implied in what has been already said: for if perfection were once attained, there could remain no more room for progress. But we have seen it to be the duty, the habit, the instinct of the real Christian, to aim at progress as long as he lives. "If we say we have no sin, we do indeed deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (i. John i. 8.) It is true that the member of Christ is "created anew after

the image of him that created him." (Col. iii. 10.) But this lovely image is obscured by fleshly mists which rise and float around it. These are not the same in all. They vary with the prevailing sins, by which each is most easily beset. And here, the treachery of the heart betrays itself afresh, secretly pleading to have some favorite indulgence spared, on the ground that perfection is impossible of attainment. It *is* so, and will be found so, after every the most strenuous and persevering effort; but to make this an excuse for wilfully relaxing the effort, is an abuse of the truth, and a deception of ourselves.

Perfection is unattainable in this life, because to whatever extent the spirit may be sanctified and assimilated to God, the flesh is still under the original curse. We are in a body of humiliation, (ταπεινώσεως Phil. iii. 21,) a body of sin and death. At the resurrection we shall have perfection in holiness, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible shall have put on incorruption; but for the present "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together; and not only they, but ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."*

For what is a member of the church of God? What is a Christian indeed? The question is a simple one, but a scriptural answer to it, is fraught

* Rom. viii. 22, 23.

with most excellent wisdom. A real Christian is an immortal compound being, consisting of two essential parts; first, of all that which other men consist of, body and soul, with the powers, passions, and infirmities thereunto belonging; and, secondly, of that which no other man except a real Christian possesses, viz., that which is born in him, and sustained in him by the Holy Spirit of God. And what is that? I answer in the words of the Lord; "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." * Hence the Apostle calls the Christian a *spiritual* man (πνευματικος) as distinguished from all others who are called natural or *soulish* men. (ψυχικοι.)†

By a true member of the true church of God, then, I would be understood to mean, a man or woman who possesses, not only a human body with all its wants, infirmities, and lusts, and a human soul with all its capacities; but also a heaven-born spirit with all its holiness: a man or woman in whom this spirit does not acquire such an ascendancy as to resist effectually and at all times the desires and motions of the natural body and soul: this would be perfection; and in whom the natural body and soul do not acquire or retain such an ascendancy as to overbear effectually and at all times the motions and desires of the Spirit—this would be unconverted nature; but a man or woman, in whom nature born of Adam, and spirit born of God, both live, and live contrary the one to the other, so that the Christian cannot *do* the things that he *would* do.

* St. John iii. 6. † 1 Cor. ii.

To will is present with him, the spirit is willing; but how to perform that which is good he finds not; the flesh is weak. With the mind he serves the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin.* The spirit would be holy; nature cannot. Nature would be unholy; the spirit cannot. The spirit would be like God; nature cannot. Nature would be like Satan; the spirit cannot. A bird of paradise is detained in a cage of fallen humanity. The cage cannot kill the bird, the bird cannot free itself from the cage, neither can it transform the cage into its own likeness. It flutters and falls back. It sighs for liberty, and flutters again. It quiets itself in patience, and sings in hope of deliverance; and thus it must flutter and sigh, and sing and wait, till the cage is removed. "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." "To depart and be with Christ is far better;" but concerning that state of existence, little is revealed. Much has indeed been fancied. Sentiment and poetry and heresy have been busy here. Tender hearts, vivid imaginations, and guilty consciences, have all been eloquent. But the word of God, from which alone satisfactory information on such a subject could be derived, is silent; with the exception of a few general, very general intimations, quite silent. Lazarus, who was permitted to live among men after having been four days absent from the body, did not, so far as we can learn from the sacred narrative, utter one syllable upon the subject.

* Gal. v. 16—18; Rom. vii. 18, 25.

It is at the resurrection of the body, and not before, that the church of God, perfected in the holiness of each member, and perfected in the then complete assembly of all the members, shall be "presented to the Lord, her Head, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 27.) As we have borne the image of the earthy, (the first Adam,) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, (the second Adam). But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's (οἱ χριστοῦ) at his coming; when he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (1 Cor. xv.; Phil. iii.) "Then shall I be satisfied," exclaims the Psalmist, "when I awake with thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15.)

This is "the blessed hope" to which the church of God in all ages has looked forward as her "perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul." The language of one of her most distinguished members in ancient times, was, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;" so far the language might be applied to the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he stood in our nature on the earth; but what follows cannot be so applied, neither can it be fulfilled until the resurrection of the body, for the patriarch added, "and though after

my skin, worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh* shall I see God." (Job xix. 25, 26.)

Saint Paul, before Felix, said, "I have hope toward God, which they themselves (the Jews) also allow; that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." And when answering for himself before King Agrippa, he said, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6—8.) The resurrection then, including the perfected holiness of the church, was the promise made of God unto the Jewish fathers.* All who believed, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise (the thing promised). They had it in word, saw it afar off, were persuaded of it, embraced it, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims here waiting for it, but they received it not in fact. (Heb. xi.) It was not God's plan to bestow this consummation upon the members of Christ's body *seriatim*,

* "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises."—Art. vii.

(day by day, as he bestows spiritual renewal,) but *simultaneously*, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. He has prepared that better thing for us who believe in these last days, as well as for them; that they should not be made perfect without us, (Heb. xi. 40,) but that they with us, and we with them, should be made perfect together.

And now we ask, if what has been here written be a scriptural account of the holiness of the church of God, where are the members of that church to be found? What community among men can advance any scriptural claim to the name of "the church of God"? Can the Greek, or the Roman, or the English, or the Scotch — which all call themselves churches — can any one of them, or can they all taken together, be called, with scriptural propriety, the church of God? Will all their members, or a majority of their members, or even in the most favourable instance, will any considerable proportion of their members bear comparison for a moment with what the word of God describes as indispensable in *every* member of the church of God? It is not denied that these and other sections of those "who profess and call themselves Christians" may in a different sense be called churches: but this admission does not invalidate or weaken in the slightest degree, the conclusion we are compelled to arrive at, viz., that it is an usurpation, wholly untenable on scriptural grounds, for any or all of them to assume the title of the church of God, the catholic church.

They all contain and recognise, and sanction, and caress, multitudes whom the church of God utterly repudiates. For the church of God is holy, not as a corporation in virtue of its office, and in defiance of the unholiness of its living members, but as a body consisting of members *each* of which discharges its own holy office: not as an aggregate invested with *ideal* holiness, though composed—in the far greater part—of unholy items; but as a company of men, and women, and children, in *each* of whom the Holy Spirit of God *really* dwells, maintaining against all opposition, and gently strengthening under every pressure, faith, and hope, and love—these three; and the greatest of these is love.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST.—ITS APOSTOLICITY.

Apostolicity, what? Romish definition of it — Scriptural definition of it—The Apostles' "doctrine and fellowship"—Without the doctrine, no Apostolical church—Proofs—Dr. Barrow—Mr. Palmer—Opposition to this on the hypothesis of developement answered — Tertullian — Apostles' fellowship, what?—Connexion with the doctrine—Succession cannot secure either the doctrine or the fellowship—Proofs—Claim to infallibility from analogy with the Jewish church answered—where is an Apostolical church to be found—only among spiritual men—Proofs.

Apostolicity is not a word which I would have invented, or of choice adopted; but as it is commonly enumerated among the distinguishing and indispensable notes of the true visible church, I am anxious to show the vitally important sense in which I think it may be applied as descriptive of the church of God in Christ.

I must premise, however, that I do not adopt the term in the meaning usually assigned to it by controversialists, and therefore I am bound to state

explicitly in what meaning I do adopt it. For clearness sake I shall do this by contrast.

Apostolicity, as commonly understood in this controversy, signifies the manifest succession of the pastors and bishops of the church in ordination after ordination, and consecration after consecration, in an unbroken chain, from the Apostles down to our own times; which succession, it is alleged, is a proof that the church possessing it is the catholic church of Christ.

Messrs. Kirk and Berrington, in their compendium of Roman doctrine, open their chapter on Apostolicity, thus.

"SUCCESSION FROM THE APOSTLES.

"SCRIPTURE.

"Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

"Acts ii. 41, 42. There were added to them about three thousand souls; and they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles."

"Eph. iv. 11—14. And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and others some Evangelists, and others some pastors and doctors: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all meet into the unity of faith. That henceforth we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

" Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Remember your prelates who have spoken to you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation—obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls."*

This is the only attempt made by these gentlemen to show that their doctrine of Apostolicity is confirmed by scripture, and it must be confessed that the foundation they build upon is not very clear to their purpose. They have not condescended to point out how these passages of scripture support their opinions; but after what is here transcribed, they proceed without further comment, to cite from the fathers.

It is to one of the passages of holy scripture quoted above, that I now refer as giving the true idea of genuine Apostolicity. It is St. Luke's description of the first important accession to the infant christian church.

" The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Acts ii. 41, 42.

* *The faith of Catholics, &c.* London, Booker. 1830. *Second Edition*, pp. 62, 63. This compilation is used as a text book by the Roman priests in this country; notwithstanding Mr. Pope's unanswered exposure of its disgraceful misquotations from the Fathers.

By Apostolicity then, I would be understood to mean "stedfast continuance in the Apostle's *doctrine* and *fellowship*."

I shall now endeavour to show.

I. That without such continuance, there can be no Apostolical church.

II. That regular unbroken succession, even if it could be proved, would not secure this indispensable conformity to the Apostles, either in doctrine or fellowship. And therefore,

III. That in looking for a true Apostolic church, we must look along the line, not of ecclesiastical succession alone since the days of the Apostles, but rather of continuance in a doctrine and fellowship which will bear accurate comparison with the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles as described in the holy scriptures.

I. First, then, the Apostolicity of the church of God in Christ, consists in a stedfast continuance in the Apostles' *doctrine*.

This is so clear, so true, so infallible a mark of the church of God, that when any company of men professing and calling themselves a church, refuse to be tried by it, there arises irresistibly a *prima facie* suspicion that they are conscious to themselves of holding doctrine which will not bear comparison with the Apostles' doctrine. If not, why object to the test? Differences might naturally and honestly arise in the application of the test, but the rejection

of an appeal to the doctrine as a test altogether, can scarcely be reconciled with an honest desire to maintain nothing but truth.

On our side we constantly court an appeal to the doctrine, and a comparison of the Apostle's doctrine with our doctrine. I shall not, of course, attempt to describe in detail what the Apostle's doctrine is. This would be a new and a wide subject. I must take for granted, for the present, that my readers are substantially instructed in that doctrine, and able therefore to appreciate a general reference to it, whether of comparison or contrast. My immediate object is, to show that consent in faith, and opinion, concerning all principal matters of doctrine, or, as St. Luke expresses it, "continuance in the Apostle's doctrine," is an indispensable characteristic of an apostolical church; that where any of the fundamental doctrines of the faith once delivered to the saints, are denied; it is an abuse of language, a contradiction of holy scripture, and of the best ancient writers, to admit the existence of Christianity at all.

This is not in harmony with the latitudinarianism of these times, which is in truth but another name for that easy indifference about vital religion, which prefers the present peace and urbanity of society, to the everlasting salvation of immortal souls. Truth, however, is truth; and the things which the Apostles, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, bound and loosed on earth, will be found

bound and loosed in the judgment of God; to the dismay of many who softly sentimentalise on divine love, and seem to think that God has no more real regard to his own veracity than they have.

St. Paul makes the introduction of false doctrine a ground of an excommunicating anathema. Writing to the Christians at Galatia, he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."* A departure, therefore, from apostolical *doctrine*, so far from being compatible with the continuance of an apostolical church, incurs distinctly and decidedly the Apostle's anathema.

It will be observed that the members of the church are here addressed as persons competent to determine whether what they heard from another teacher did, or did not, coincide with what they had heard from St. Paul. If not, this language of his would be utterly meaningless and vain. Had they been bound to receive with deference, whatever a teacher ordained in the regular succession told them; then the true ground of apostolical warning would have been against unaccredited teachers; but instead of this we find the Apostle making the supposition of

* Gal. i. 6—8.

an angel from heaven teaching, or of himself teaching, a different doctrine from what he had originally taught them; and even then, fixing the attention and judgment of the people on the doctrine taught so supremely, that if it did not harmonize with the gospel which they had already received, even the angel, or the Apostle himself, was to be rejected with horror. "Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." It is impossible to suppose a case, or to make use of language more entirely to our purpose than this.

Saint John, in like manner, fixes the attention of the members of the church on the doctrine taught, and pronounces every spirit which teaches false doctrine to be a spirit of anti-christ. Instead of referring generally to "the gospel," as St. Paul did, when writing to the Galatians; St. John makes use of his favourite compendium of the gospel as a summary of divine truth, from which, in its full meaning, no deviation was compatible with genuine Christianity. This summary is "Jesus Christ come in the flesh;" and the Apostle's language is, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." In proceeding then to give a test whereby these false prophets might be distinguished from the true, *St. John says nothing about succession:* strange omission! if real apostolicity consist in regular succession; unaccountable

neglect in an inspired Apostle; if the true mission of a christian teacher consist in his ordination! St. John's test is of a totally different character. It is an appeal to the acknowledgment or non-acknowledgment of the true doctrine of the gospel, as expressed in his summary. He says, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."*

Here, as by St. Paul, the people are addressed as being competent to judge whether what they heard, from any teacher, did or did not agree with the truth of the gospel as it had been preached and explained by the Apostle. Their attention is called to this very point, and they are solemnly enjoined to judge what they hear, on peril of receiving and embracing anti-christian instead of christian teaching. *Every* teacher who did not coincide with the true doctrine, is pronounced to be of anti-christ. No exception is made for those who were regularly ordained in "the succession;" neither can it be pretended that the Apostle's supposition of anti-christian teachers implies in such persons (as a matter of course) the want of true ordination. On the contrary, in the second chapter of his epistle, where he first warns the brethren against the "many anti-

* 1 John iv. 1—3.

christs" who were gone forth, he says, "They went out from us; but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."* These teachers had been of the apostolical company outwardly, or they could not have manifestly forsaken it. But they could not have belonged to it outwardly without being in the succession. And therefore, clearly, the inspired test of true apostolicity is not succession or not succession, but truth or not truth of christian doctrine. And as clearly, the judges of what was taught, whether true or false, to whom the Apostle appeals, were not councils of the teachers, but congregations of the hearers, who were thus encouraged not to continue babes, neither unskilful in the word of righteousness; but to cultivate discernment and discrimination, having their spiritual senses exercised by reason of use, to discern both good and evil, both truth and falsehood.

It is "*the church* of the living God," and not only the ministry of that church, however regularly ordained, that is "the pillar and ground of *the truth*"—true doctrine, as is evident from the summary that follows, "God manifest in the flesh," &c., and its contrast with the false doctrines, which are described as the predicted characteristics of the apostacy from the church. (Compare 1 Tim. iii. 14—16 with iv. 1—3.)

* 1 John ii. 18, 19.

Dr. Barrow says, "It is evident that the church is one by consent in faith and opinion concerning all principal matters of doctrine, especially in those which have considerable influence on the practice of piety toward God, righteousness toward men, and sobriety of conversation 'to teach us which the grace of God did appear.'"

"As he that should in any principal doctrine differ from Plato, (denying the immortality of the soul, the providence of God, the natural difference of good and evil,) would not be a Platonist; so he that dissenteth from any *doctrine* of importance, manifestly taught by Christ, doth renounce Christianity.

"All Christians are 'delivered into one form of *doctrine*,' to which they must stiffly and stedfastly adhere, keeping the depositum committed to them; they must 'strive together for the faith of the Gospel,' and 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints;' they must 'hold fast the form of sound words, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;' that great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto them by his hearers, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.'

"They are bound 'to mind,' or think 'one and the same thing;' 'to stand fast in one spirit with one mind;' 'to walk by the same rule;' 'to be joined

together in the same mind and in the same judgment;' 'with one mind and mouth to glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"They are obliged to disclaim consortship with the gainsayers of this doctrine; to stand off from those who do ἑτεροδοξεῖν, or who do not consent to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; to 'mark those who make divisions, and scandals, beside the doctrine which Christians had learned, and to decline from them;' to 'reject heretics;' to 'beware of false prophets; of seducers; of those who speak perverse things to draw disciples after them;' to 'pronounce anathema on whoever shall preach any other *doctrine.*'"

"Thus are Christians 'one in Christ Jesus;' thus are they (as Tertullian speaketh) 'confederated in the society of a sacrament,'* or of one profession.

"This preaching and this faith the church having received, though dispersed over the world, doth carefully hold as inhabiting one house; and alike believeth these things, as if it had one soul and the same heart, and consonantly doth preach, and teach, and deliver these things, as if it had but one mouth.†

"As for kings, though their kingdoms be divided, yet he equally expects from every one of them one

* Tertull. in Marc. iv. 5.

† Iren. i. 3. (Apud. Epiph. Hær. 31.)

dispensation, and one and the same sacrifice of a true confession and praise. So that though there may seem to be a diversity of temporal ordinances, yet an unity and agreement in the right faith may be held and maintained among them."

"In regard to this union in faith peculiarly, the body of Christians, adhering to it, was called the catholic church, from which all those were esteemed *ipso facto* to be cut off, and separated, who in any point deserted that faith; such a one, (saith St. Paul,) ἐξέστραπται, is turned aside, or hath left the Christian way of life. He in reality is no Christian, nor is to be avowed or treated as such, but is to be disclaimed, rejected, and shunned.

"'He,' saith St. Cyprian, 'cannot seem a Christian who doth not persist in the unity of Christ's gospel and *faith*.'*

"'If,' saith Tertullian, 'a man be a heretic, he cannot be a Christian.'†

"Whence Hegesippus saith of the old heretics, that they did 'divide the unity of the church by pernicious speeches against God and his Christ.'‡

"'The virtue, (saith the pastor Hermes, cited by Clemens Alex.) "which doth keep the church together is faith."'§

"So the fathers of the sixth council tell the em-

* Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.

† Tertull. de Præscr. cap. 37.

‡ Eus. Hist. iv. 22.

§ Herm. apud Clem. Strom. ii. p. 281.

peror that they were members one of another, and did constitute the one body of Christ by consent of *opinion* with him, and one another; and by faith." *

" 'We ought in all things to hold the unity of the catholic church; and not to yield anything to the enemies of faith and truth.' †

" 'In each part of the world this faith is one, because this is the Christian faith.' ‡

" 'He denies Christ who confesses not all things that are Christ's.' §

" 'Hence in common practice whoever did appear to differ from the common faith was rejected as an apostate from Christianity, and unworthy the communion of other Christians." ‖

The testimony here borne to the indispensable necessity of oneness in all fundamental *doctrine* is decisive; while the learned and eloquent writer does not fail to add, that on other points of less moment, and more obscurely delivered, Christians might dissent from one another without breach of unity, and dispute with one another without breach of charity.

Mr. Palmer says, " It is undeniable that the end of Christ's mission on earth was the sanctification of his people. He called us with a holy calling. (2 Tim. i. 9.) His will is our sanctification. (1 Thess.

* Conc. vi. Act. xviii., p. 271.

† Cypr. Ep. 71.

‡ Aug. cont. Jul. i. 2 (p. 203).

§ Ambr. in Luc. lib. vi. cap. 9, p. 205.

iv. 3.) Therefore, if it could be clearly shewn that any society professing to be christian denied the obligation of good works, and taught its members that they might freely indulge in wickedness, such a society would be evidently anathema from Jesus Christ. Nothing further could be required to prove it." *

This is most true, and the argument may, with undiminished truth, be transferred to any fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. For example; it is undeniable that the end of Christ's mission on earth was the justification of his people. We are "justified freely by his grace." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Rom. iii. 24; v. 19.) "His will is our justification by faith." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Therefore if it could be clearly shewn that any society professing to be christian denied justification by faith, and taught its members that they might be justified by works, such a society would be evidently anathema from Jesus Christ. Nothing further could be required to prove it.

(1.) A company of men professing and calling themselves a christian Church, or the church of Christ, whatever their outward circumstances may be, in name, numbers, authority, wealth, succession, and if there be any other outward advantage; cannot be indeed an apostolical church, if they teach as indispensable to salvation a doctrine or doctrines which the apostles never taught. For example. If

* Vol. i. p. 133.

such a company teach authoritatively and as indispensable to salvation, that in the Lord's Supper, "there is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead:" they cannot be an apostolical church, because the apostles never so taught.

This is a favorable instance on which to try one important branch of this question, because many of our adversaries agree in the statement that the Apostles themselves never taught this; yet they maintain the apostolicity of the Church, which teaches it as absolutely essential. This they do, on the ground of what is called *development*, i. e. either, first, that although the doctrine itself was not explicitly taught by the Apostles, yet the germ of it was contained in what they taught, and afterwards cultivated into mature growth by the piety and intelligence of their successors—or, secondly, that inspiration such as the Apostles had, is a permanent endowment of the Christian Church, considered collectively as the body of Christ; and consequently that every decision of the church collective, duly come to in a competent assembly, presided over by the Chief Bishop, is as certainly and infallibly true, and ought to be as finally decisive, as any thing which the Apostles themselves taught.*

* On this subject Mr. Ward writes thus:—"When we speak to the Apostles having taught some principle of the early church, we mean what we say; not that they gave to their successors an embodiment of that principle carried

It will be observed that this claim of development entirely destroys the claims at other times grounded on antiquity. The primitive fathers are appealed to as containing the best and safest expositions of chris-

to its farthest limits. Every principle, which (as Mr. Carlyle would say) is a reality, not a sham, has indefinite results contained within it, of which those who first receive it have not even the faintest suspicion. They may hold it for some length of time in company with other modes of thought which are virtually inconsistent with it; they may so hold it through a life, through many lives, until gradually and unconsciously it is matured within, and springs forth into full development. Now the reverse of this is commonly assumed by controversialists; they find the fathers of some later century far more explicit and unanimous than in earlier times, on some great truth, and immediately conclude that it is the matured fruit of some false principle which has crept into the church. Most illogically indeed! unless it be *false* principles only which are carried forward but slowly and by degrees to their full bearing. Whether *in this or that case*, it be *false* is matter of evidence in the particular instance; but to say that *à priori* it *probably* is so is really to rule that the Apostles taught no *principle* whatever. Real or living principles differ from mere formulæ as the works of nature from the works of art; a table or a chair is made once for all, and remains stationary in size and proportions as it came from the maker's hands; but a small seed, small and imperceptible, grows and expands without human cognizance, and *ends*, not *begins*, by banishing all rival claimants from the space it is destined to occupy. It may well be, then, as Mr. Goode has pointed out, (vol. ii. p. 202—214,) that the fifth century was far more decided and interested than the second in the defence of St. Mary's perpetual virginity, and yet may have been altogether right in such increased love of the doctrine. Such love may well have been the natural and legitimate development of

tian truth, because they lived nearest to the source, the apostolical period itself. But what advantage did this give them, if the truth did not come *perfect* from the source? If any part of it came from the Apostles only as an unripe germ which was to develop its rich stores afterwards, then the primitive fathers may have died during the period of the germ, and previous to the development. The same may be said of the Nicene fathers; of the mediæval fathers; perhaps the true development was the reformation; or possibly there may remain a development still.* At all events, if development be

principles taught by the Apostles, (e. g. the blessedness of celibacy, the sacramental efficacy of proximity to our Lord, the unspeakable dignity to which human nature is raised by the incarnation, &c., &c.,) and St. Augustine may have been most pious and wisely zealous in denouncing those as *heretics* (vol. ii. p. 211, 213) who did not receive a statement which the *orthodox*, by that time, had discovered to have been ever morally involved in the principles they held *from the first.*

Again—the Apostles may not only have taught principles without their *development*, but *doctrines* without their *analysis.*

Again—still though the foundations of the faith were fully realized from the first, other principles, there were no doubt, and very far from unimportant ones, *which were deposited, as it were, in germ, within the bosom of the church;* that her internal action might gradually nurture them, or external circumstances hasten their appearance on the surface."—*Ward's Ideal, &c.*, pp. 547, 550.

* No man, holding this doctrine of development, can at any time have any certainty that he is in possession of the revealed will of God. This leaves him practically without revelation altogether; because he may not form any decided opinion, or

appealed to, antiquity must be relinquished, and the celebrated saying of Tertullian, *id extraneum et falsum, quod sit posterius immissum,* must be reversed.

If it be retorted, that development being relin-

engage in any zealous practice, on the authority of Scripture or antiquity, or both, lest what remains to be developed should prove him to be in fatal error; neither may he reject anything which seems now to be false, from its opposition to Scripture and antiquity, lest what remains to be developed should prove that in so doing he has been rejecting a catholic truth. We have a notable instance of this in the present position (December 1845) of Dr. Pusey, who hesitates to condemn Roman doctrine lest it should eventually prove to be true, and who hesitates to leave the Church of England lest this should eventually prove to be wrong. In the secession, after so long a struggle, of his more talented and less scrupulous coadjutors, we hail a very gratifying practical proof that the Church of England cannot be Romanised.

To do Mr. Newman justice, he made the experiment with consummate ability, and of course with success over some minds. Those who felt themselves agreeing with him, up to the point of his secession, and who now refuse or hesitate to follow his example, cannot have very comforting assurances of their own sincerity.

If there remain among us any of his disciples bent on accomplishing still what he has failed to accomplish, they will require a double measure of caution, because now they are justly suspected, and their movements watched.

The younger and less adroit pupils in their school, who occupy the lower forms through the country, and are not likely to be heard of beyond the precincts of their own villages; will, it is to be hoped, confine themselves to what they consider the true rubrical and canonical practice of the Church of England.

quished, antiquity may and ought to be appealed to; we answer, certainly. We entirely agree with the saying of Pope Stephen, "Nihil nóvandum — nil nisi quod traditum est;" and with Vincentius of Lerins, "retenta est antiquitas, explosa novitas." Provided always that the appeal to antiquity be fairly made and fully carried out; and that what is really oldest be received as the best. Which is older, God or Satan? Truth or falsehood? The wheat which the master sowed, or the tares which the enemy sowed among it? Which is older, the Scripture or the fathers? The Nicene Creed, the distinguishing symbol of the reformed as it was of the early churches, or the creed of Pope Pius IV.?*

* A brief reference to these two creeds is decisive of the matter of antiquity in this controversy. The creed of the ancient Christian churches was defined by their assembled prelates at Nice in A. D. 325. This Nicene Creed was recited as the received creed of the churches, by the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 381. And again it was so recited by the Council of Ephesus, A. D. 431. This Council (of Ephesus) added a solemn sentence of excommunication against any one who should "dare to compose, or to profess, or to offer any other form of faith." The Nicene Creed was again recited as the catholic creed of the churches, at the Council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451.

EXTRACT FROM THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON.

"The catholic faith delivered by the holy three hundred and eighteen fathers, (viz., at Nice,) and by the holy one hundred and fifty fathers, (viz. at Constantinople,) also by the other most holy and glorious fathers, (viz. at Ephesus,) we guard, and according to that we believe. The most reverend bishops ex-

Revealed religion is not like a science of human discovery, at first imperfect, and gradually improved under successive developments, throwing more and more light upon the original facts and fundamental principles; neither is it left dependent for its complement, or necessary corollaries, on assemblies of fallible men. Just the reverse. It came perfect and entire from the hand of its divine Author, and will admit of no mutilations or additions by the hand of man. When under pretence of simplyfying it, we attempt to hide any of its deep and mys-

claimed, 'No person makes any other exposition of faith. We neither attempt nor dare to do so. For the fathers have taught, and in writings are preserved those things which have been set forth by them; and other than these we cannot speak.'

"Those principles which have been set forth are sufficient: it is not lawful to make any other exposition."

The same Nicene Creed was recited as still the creed of the churches, by the Council of Trent, in her third session, Feb. 4th, A. D. 1546.

Up to that period no other creed had been heard of in the churches. Various heretical opinions and schismatical practices, some borrowed from paganism, some from Judæism, some from perverted interpretations of detached passages of scripture, especially from the application to the Christian dispensation of prophecies which describe the millennium, had been introduced by individuals, and greatly corrupted and divided the churches; but the Nicene Creed was still the generally, the almost universally, recognized symbol of the Catholic Christian faith.

It was reserved for the bishop of Rome, A. D. 1564, *to introduce a new creed.* All our controversy with Rome has reference to the articles of this new creed.

terious announcements from the people, or when, under pretence of magnifying it, we attempt to add imposing ceremonies or gorgeous magnificence to its chaste and severe simplicity; in either case, we mar the fair symmetry of the daughter of heaven, and present to view a monster of our own imagination.* Had the New Testament contained germs designed to ripen into such fruit-bearing as Romanist controversialists defend, it would not, in common consistency, have contained such language as this: well calculated to make its sincere disciples shudder at developments. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Rev. xxii. 18.

* Mr. Newman in his recently published treatise,[a] labours to establish his theory of developed Christianity by analogies. The species of development for which he contends will be understood by the following specimen. After citing a passage from Bishop Butler, in which the great philosopher argues our obligations to worship the Son and the Holy Ghost, from the *revealed relations* towards those divine persons in the Godhead in which we stand; Mr. Newman observes, "Here is a development of doctrine into worship: in like manner the doctrine of the beatification of the saints has been developed into their *Cultus;* of the θεοτόκος, or Mother of God, into *hyperdulia;* and of the real presence into adoration of the host." p. 50.

In defence of the reasonableness and propriety of such developments, Mr. Newman refers to the progressive improvements in

[a] *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.* London: Toovey, 1845.

And here we find the true scriptural answer to the second aspect of development above mentioned. For if an inspiration such as the Apostles had, be a permanent endowment of the church collective; and

human sciences, natural and political. He says, "When some new philosophy, or its portions, are introduced into the measures of the legislature, or into the concessions made to a political party, or into commercial or agricultural policy, it is often said, 'we have not seen the end of this:' 'it is an instalment of future concessions;' our 'children will see.' We feel that it has unknown bearings and issues." p. 48. "And so in philosophy, the systems of physics or morals, which go by celebrated names, proceed upon the assumption of certain conditions which are necessary for every stage of development." . . . . "And so in military matters, the discovery of gunpowder developed the science of attack and defence in a new instrumentality." . . . . "So states have their respective policies, on which they move forward, and which are the conditions of their well being." pp. 67, 68.

But it may be asked, what have these things to do with revealed religion; or where is the justice of the presumed analogy? In all these things fallen man is left to the exercise of his natural powers; and the advances, or even the mistakes and failures of one man lead to improvements by another, each profiting by the experience of his predecessor in the field of inquiry. But in revealed religion, man is not left to the exercise of his natural powers, for the progressive attainment of, and improvement in, truth. On the contrary, he is supernaturally put in possession of truth, pure and perfect from its divine source. Is it so? This is the question between us who say so concerning the Scriptures, and those who disparage the perfectness, in this respect, of the sacred volume. All Mr. Newman's analogies are, therefore,—in the assumption of being fairly applicable—guilty of a *petitio principii*.

One instance adduced by Mr. Newman, supplies remarkable

if consequently, every decision of that church duly come to be as certainly and infallibly true as any thing taught by the Apostles themselves: then the canon of inspired teaching has never yet been perfected,

elements for its own refutation. He says: "The admission of Jews to municipal offices has lately been defended * on the ground that it is the introduction of no new principle, but a development of one already received; that its great premises have been decided long since, and that the present age has but to draw the conclusion that it is not open to us to inquire what ought to be done in the abstract, since there is no ideal model for the infallible guidance of nations; that change is only a question of time, and that there is a time for all things; that the application of principles ought not to go beyond the actual case, neither preceding nor coming after an imperative demand," &c. p. 48, 49.

How utterly the implied analogy between this and revealed religion breaks down at the first touch? Doubtless, in the complicated details of political measures, concerning which, no higher wisdom than man's can be consulted, and in the management of which, it may be man's best wisdom to vary with varying circumstances; it is not open to us to inquire what ought to be done in the abstract, since there is no ideal model for the infallible guidance of nations. But with reference to Christian truth, the case is totally different. Here we have "the wisdom of God," which is perfect; and here, therefore, it is open to us to inquire what ought to be believed in the abstract, since there is an ideal model for the infallible guidance of Christians: "that the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works." Doubtless, in human policy, change is only a question of time; but in Christianity there is no change. The gospel, "the everlasting gospel," like its Divine Author, is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Doubtless, principles of human wis-

* *Times Newspaper*, March, 1845.

has never yet closed. With this, the passage of holy scripture just now quoted, is utterly irreconcilable: and before any church can prove her right to add to what is written, (and acknowledged by all

dom, shortsighted as they are, and liable to reversal, by unforeseen occurrences, ought not to be applied dogmatically beyond the actual case; but the principles of revealed religion are applicable to all cases; they have emanated from Him who "declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done:" no occurrence or combination of occurrences, unforeseen and unprovided for in principle, can by possibility arise—"the word of God liveth and abideth for ever." In a subsequent chapter of his book, Mr. Newman insists upon the fact, which no one I believe ever disputed, that Christianity cannot be *learned* all at once. He says, "It is the peculiarity of the human mind, that it cannot take an object in, which is submitted to it, simply and integrally. It conceives by means of definition or description; whole subjects do not create in the intellect whole ideas, but are, to use a mathematical phrase, thrown into series, into a number of statements, strengthening, interpreting, connecting each other, and with more or less exactness approximating, as they accumulate, to a perfect image. There is no other way of learning or of teaching." . . . . "The more claim an idea has to be considered living, the more various will be its aspects; and the more social and political is its nature, the more complicated and subtle will be its developments, and the longer and more eventful will be its course. Such is Christianity: and whatever has been said in the last chapter, about the development of ideas generally, becomes of course an antecedent argument for its progressive development." pp. 94, 95. I venture to affirm that the right answer to this consists in the detection and exposure of a sophism. The development which in the illustration is ascribed to *the mind of the learner*, is in the application ascribed to *the things learned*. A

parties engaged in this controversy to be the inspired word of God,) she must prove her right to subtract from, or avowedly and openly to disobey what is written. It is manifest, that a power lodged in the

gradual understanding of revelation is a development of the mind of the student, not a development of christian doctrine. We do not contend that *men learn* christian doctrine perfectly at once; but we do contend that *all that is to be learned of it*, is revealed perfectly in the sacred writings, and that consequently those writings prescribe the bounds beyond which all supposed developments of christian doctrine are nothing better than human conjectures.

Upon Mr. Newman's own principles of development, it may be fairly inquired of him, how he has arrived at any certainty, if indeed he pretend to any, that having reached all Roman doctrine, as at present exhibited, he has therein attained to the *ne plus ultra* of development? Did the bud of christian doctrine, progressively unfolding its rich stores for fifteen centuries, become the full blown and last rose of summer, at the Council of Trent? If he affirm this, he cuts off all subsequent development, and ascribes to that council, the finality which we ascribe to the Holy Scriptures. Upon what principle this should be done, or defended, does not appear. If he reject finality altogether, and his arguments seem fairly to shut him up to this, he cannot consistently remain stunted from all further growth by the iron band of a church, whose boasted motto is *semper eadem*. Christian doctrine, in his progressive mind, must burst the Tridentine bands, and develop into still richer luxuriance, *cultus* rising into *hyperdulia*, hyperdulia into *latria*, and latria into some quintessence of worship for which logical development has not yet invented a suitable title. This is a serious prospect.

The most imposing passages in Mr. Newman's book are those in which he claims Bishop Butler for an ally: but the intelligent and cautious reader will perceive that what Butler says of *the*

church to add, as of divine authority, any teaching contrary to the scriptures, would be a power to render the scriptures practically useless. It is vain to attempt half measures in this matter. If we begin by admitting in the church any such depositum of inspiration as that claimed by the objection now under review; we shall be shut up, and most deservedly, to a practical disregard of the holy scriptures. We shall lose sight of the written standard of Apostolical truth, as of a thing superseded by a living Apostolical authority, just as we would naturally turn away from a man's letter, if we could enjoy the privilege of converse with the man himself.

dispensation of Christianity as a system, Mr. Newman applies—if his citations from "The Analogy" have any application—to the *development of christian doctrine.* And here lurks another sophism. Butler admits that the truths revealed in scripture suggest to the mind other things which are not revealed; and that obscurities and difficulties are an inevitable consequence: but he denies that such obscurities and difficulties are any just objection to the christian system; since the system of nature might with equal justice be objected to because of similar obscurities and difficulties. In conducting this argument, Butler calls Christianity, "a scheme revealed but in part," but he nowhere intimates that it is the office of the church, or in any wise in man's power, to add the remaining parts, so as to render the scheme more perfect, and thereby more perfectly intelligible.

Mr. Newman's object is to establish this perfection attaining development; and he cannot, in strict fairness, cite Butler as an authority on his side. He has, however, availed himself of what Butler says of the imperfection of Christianity as a revealed system or dispensation from God; to claim this high authority in support of his alleged imperfection of Christianity, as an inchoate germ of doctrine to be developed by the church.

Where then shall we find any rectifying standard of appeal in any doubtful case? We have admitted an authority said to be equal with the scriptures, but because alive and present, practically superior: and we cannot consistently appeal from it, back again to the scriptures. "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." Men cannot serve holy scripture which asserts its own inspired sufficiency; and a church which claims a depositum of plenary inspiration. It is right and proper that the alternative should be fairly viewed, and that men should not deceive themselves by an unexamined fancy that they can hold to such a church without despising such a Bible.

History and experience here bear their decisive testimony. Wherever such authority has been admitted in the living church; there the Bible, under plea of erroneous translation, or some other plausible but dishonest pretence, has been practically superseded, and some of its plainest commandments openly and vauntingly disobeyed.* The advocates of church

* There can be no more striking proof of this than the "Catholic" practice of *bowing down* to images, though "God spake these words and said, Thou shalt not bow down to them." Whether these words form a second commandment, as in our division of them, or an enlargement of the first, as in the division made by the Roman church, the fact remains the same, plainly recorded in *every* version of the holy scriptures. "God said, Thou shalt not *bow down* to them."

authority, in the sense here opposed, have indeed exposed themselves to the rebuke which has been, I do not know by whom, thus quaintly expressed :

> " If Chaldee, Hebrew, Syriac, will not bend,
> And stubborn Greek refuse to be their friend :
> If languages and copies all cry, No !
> THE CHURCH *has said it, and it must be so !*"

But this claim on the part of the church, is a modern invention. The ancients knew nothing of it. Hear Tertullian, a witness frequently appealed to, by our opponents in this controversy. He is as pointed as can be desired, on the necessity of apostolical *doctrine*, to the apostolicity of a church ; and on the sufficiency of such doctrine as a test, even where direct succession cannot be claimed.

I cite the following passages from the pages of Messrs Kirk and Berrington, adopting their translation.*

TERTULLIAN. " We are not allowed to indulge our own humour, nor to choose what another has invented. We have the apostles of our Lord for founders, who were not themselves the inventors nor authors of what they have left us ; but they have faithfully taught the world the doctrine which they received from Christ. Therefore, if an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, we would say anathema to him. Heresies have arisen from philosophy and from human wisdom, which is different

* Faith of Catholics, pp. 66, 67.

from the spirit of Christianity. What is there common between Athens and Jerusalem? Between the academic groves and the Church? Our lessons come from the porch of Solomon, which teach us to seek the Lord in simplicity of heart. Having learned *Christ and his gospel*, we must indulge no curiosity, no further inquiry. We believe; that suffices. Our first maxim is, that nothing more is necessary." *De Prescriptione. c.* vi. vii. viii.

"It is a maxim not to be controverted, that what was first delivered is evangelical and true; and what was afterwards imported is extraneous and false. By this rule all future heresies may be tried.* But

* Which was *first delivered* then? And which was *afterwards imported?* The Scripture or the Fathers? By this rule of Tertullian, taken absolutely in the letter of it, *all* patristic teaching, seeing it was all afterwards imported, is extraneous and false. Of course he ought to be understood as saying, that what was afterwards imported, *if not in accordance with what was first delivered*, is extraneous and false. This is precisely what we say. "Having learned Christ and his gospel," which was first delivered! we bring every thing we afterwards hear or read to be tested by this standard. If Tertullian's rule be good for any thing as a practical detector of heresies, the members of the Church must in every age, be competent to compare what was afterwards imported with what was first delivered, "to refuse the evil and choose the good."

The Greek Church appears to be in perfect harmony with the Church of England, on the subject of Tradition, and the authority to be justly ascribed to the writings of the Fathers. A remarkable book, written by a professor of theology in one of the orthodox Russian Universities, was printed at St. Petersburg in

should they dare to arrogate to themselves the name of Apostolic, because at that time they may have been in existence, let them produce the origins of their churches, the regular succession of their Bishops; so that the first in that order should have been an apostle, or one constantly united to the Apostles.

1827. It is dedicated to the Synod of Russia, and has the following title.

"Christianæ, orthodoxæ, dogmatico-polemicæ Theologiæ, olim a clarissimo viro Theophane Procowicz ejusque continuatoribus adornatæ, ac in tribus voluminibus primum anno MDCCLXXXII editæ, Compendium, in usum Rossicæ studiosæ juventutis concinnatum, atque adjectione sex ultimorum librorum juxta delineationem ejusdem cl. Theophanis, ab Archimandrita Kioviensis Fratrum monasterii, publicoque S. Theologiæ in Academia Kioviensi professore, Irenaeo Falkowcki, completum. Petropoli, 1827."

A few extracts will be interesting to some of my Readers.

"*De traditionibus.*"

"Traditiones, quæ de dogmatibus fidei aut morum in Scriptura nec formaliter, nec virtualiter comprehensis adferuntur, nihil valeant, suntque rejiciendæ. (1) Quia sola Scriptura est principium Theologiæ. (2) Quia eadem ita est necessaria, ut fideles non aliunde, nisi ex ipsa, omnia ad salutem consequendam pertinentia haurire possint. (3) Quia Scriptura ita est perfecta, ut omnia dogmata, sine quibus salvari non possumus, contineat."

"*De auctoritate Patrum.*"

"*Testimonia Patrum non sunt eloquiis Dei æquiparanda sed generant tantum humanam fidem,* (1) Quia sola Scriptura est principium Theologiæ, estque sufficiens et necessaria ad salutem. (2) Quia Patrum scripta non sunt libri canonici. (3) Quia Patres confirmaturi suas sententiae ad Scripturam recurrunt. (4) Quia quidam Patres errarunt. (5) Quia ipsi Patres testantur, se aliter posse

For in this manner the Apostolic Churches deduce the order of their successions. Smyrna has her Polycarp, appointed by St. John: Rome her Clement, ordained by St. Peter; and so the other churches. Let the heretics shew this. And should they invent something like it, they will have gained nothing, since their *doctrine*, compared with that of the Apostles, by its diversity and contrariety, will shew, that it came not from any Apostle nor apostolic man. For as the Apostles would not have taught discordant doctrines, so neither would their immediate followers have taught differently from them. To this rule those churches appeal, which being of a much later foundation, as daily rising, claim not for their first

sapere, ac veritas postulat, nec scripta sua pro canonicis haberi volunt. (6) *Quia multi Patres unum Scripturae locum varie interpretati sunt; adeoque non omnes Scripturae sensum perfecte assequi poterant.*"

"De auctoritate igitur Patrum sequentes regulæ sunt observandæ: (1) Etiamsi Patres alicubi titubent, pius tamen erga eos affectus non est exuendus. (2) Non temere etiam erroris arguendi sunt; sed videndum prius, an non possint dicta eorum commode explicari. (3) *Si vero interpretationes commodae locum habere non possunt; tum ejusmodi Patrum dicta, sine dissimulatione rejicienda sunt.*"

"*Denique, qui dicunt, se malle cum Patribus errare, quam cum aliis recte sentire;* haec Cypriani verba Libr. 2. Epist. 3. audiant: "Si solus Christus audiendus est, non debemus attendere, quid aliquis ante nos faciendum putaverit; sed quid prior Christus, qui ante omnes est, fecerit. Neque enim hominis consuetudinem sequi oportet, sed Dei veritatem."

bishop either an Apostle or an immediate disciple; but *maintaining the same faith, they may be deemed apostolic.*"—*Ibid.* c. xxxi. xxxii.

Here it is admitted that heretical churches may invent something like succession; but it is plainly declared that even so, they will gain nothing, because their false doctrine will betray them. A semblance of succession may be set up, deceiving, so far, even those who have learned Christ and his gospel; but a false doctrine cannot escape their detection, and by this all heretics are refuted. While such is the paramount importance of the true doctrine, that all churches maintaining the same—i. e. the apostolic faith—may be deemed apostolic."

I feel justified now in coming to a conclusion in which I am sanguine enough to anticipate the agreement of candid christian readers, that without stedfast continuance in the Apostle's *doctrine*, there can be no apostolic church.

I proceed to notice another feature equally essential, namely,

(2.) The Apostle's fellowship.

Of this we have an interesting description in the first epistle of Saint John, where the close connexion is stated between holding the true doctrine of the Apostles, and enjoying their holy fellowship. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; for the life was manifested,

and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Here is an epitome of apostolical doctrine: Jesus Christ the eternal word, God manifest in the flesh, is the alpha and omega of it. The Apostle proceeds, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have *fellowship with us;* and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 1—3.)

Apostolical fellowship then, according to this true description, is fellowship with God, in and by Jesus Christ, the one only Mediator between God and men. In apostolical fellowship there is no mention of, because there was no place and no occasion for, any sub-mediators. Christians had "access to God;" they were "made nigh by the blood of Christ;" they were "quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and made to set together in heavenly places in Christ;" their "life was hid with Christ in God;" they had a great High Priest, passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; an High Priest touched with a feeling of all their infirmities, and ever living to make intercession for them; and therefore they had (solemn doubtless, but real and well warranted,) boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. (Eph. ii. Col. iii. Heb. iv. vii. x.)

Every member of the church of God in Christ is introduced into this fellowship. He has "obtained like precious faith" with the Apostles, (2 Pet.

i. 1.) and enters into like precious fellowship. So Saint John writes to them, "that ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." It is a holy fellowship, a test indeed for the separation of the precious from the vile; not in outward manifestation before men, but in the hidden testimony of the heart.

As the members of the church of God, have *access* into this holy fellowship by the blood of Christ, (Rom. v. 2. Ephes. ii. 13,) so also they have *continuance* in it by the same abiding propitiation. It is concerning persons who are walking in this fellowship that St. John says, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." He is not speaking of the first application of the atonement to a heathen or unconverted man; but of its continual application to a christian man. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."* If, in the enjoyment of such holy fellowship with God, and such loving fellowship with one another, we fancy that we do not require constant cleansing from sin: "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins," if our habitual state of mind be a readiness to acknowledge our faults before God; if when no special act of transgression presents itself, we nevertheless cultivate an instinctive peni-

* 1 John i. 7—9.

tence of spirit ready to cry in unaffected humility, Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth? cleanse thou me from secret faults; "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus we have not only "the blessing of the man whose iniquity (past) is forgiven and whose sin (past) is covered;" but also "the blessing of the man to whom God will not impute sin"* (present).

Concerning such persons the Apostle makes the further supposition, "If any man sin:" any man among those whom he calls his "little children," among those with whom he associates himself in what follows, "*we* have;" any baptized man obviously. Here then is a case supposed of post-baptismal sin, and here follows the beloved Apostle's treatment of such a case. What does he prescribe? Is it penance? Is it "a second plank" on which there is a bare possibility of escaping shipwreck at last; but an infinite doubtfulness whether any who are there shall escape or not? Is it a course of austerity and self-discipline, and meritorious alms-giving in satisfaction for sin, to procure if possible final forgiveness in the day of judgment? Does he inform his unhappy disciples that there is no forgiveness except in baptism, and at the day of judgment? Does he thus lavish the gospel on baptism, and then bring all who sin after baptism under the law? Having begun in the spirit does he aim at perfection by the flesh?

* Rom. iv. 7, 8.

Does he introduce "the spirit of bondage again to fear," again to produce alienation from God, and so put an end to that filial fellowship in the enjoyment of which alone true holiness can be cultivated?

O! no, no. He says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." He *is*, not was, at our baptism, but is day by day, the standing, all and always sufficient propitiation for our sins: keeping out of the way every thing that could keep us from fellowship with our God.

Here it is that a great gulf is fixed between the gospel and Romanism; and here the Romanising writers amongst ourselves, and in a peculiar manner Dr. Pusey in his celebrated Tract on baptism, are in strict accordance with Romanism, and direct hostility to the Gospel and the Church of England.

Fellowship with the Apostles did not consist in outward consorting with the Apostles' company. Many who did not so consort with them, who had never seen them in the flesh, had nevertheless true fellowship with them; while some who did consort with them for a time, and seem to belong to them, were destitute of real fellowship with them, and therefore eventually forsook them. Of the former, the Christians at Laodicea and Colosse afford a striking instance. They had never seen the Apostle's face; but though he was thus utterly a stranger to them as regarded personal acquaintance, he cordially recognizes their fellowship in the spirit, joying and

beholding their order, and the stedfastness of their faith in Christ.* Of the latter unhappy class, Demas and Diotrephes were striking examples. "Demas hath forsaken me," writes one Apostle, "having loved this present world." † "I wrote unto the church," says another Apostle, "but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." ‡

But though the "Apostle's fellowship" did not consist in, nor of necessity include, outward and visible companionship, but rather an experimental oneness in the enjoyment of God and love of one another; yet it surely did include compliance with the authoritative instructions of the Apostles, not only in points of doctrine, but also in matters of discipline and worship, e. g. To the church at Corinth the Apostle Paul wrote plainly and pointedly concerning the Lord's supper, leaving no doubt in the mind of any intelligent reader of his epistle that every member of the church should reverently "eat of that bread and *drink of that cup.*" § He wrote also concerning the language to be used in the public worship of God, that it should be a language "under-

* Col. ii. 1—5.

† 2 Tim. iv. 10.

‡ 3 John 9, 10.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 20—26.

standed of the people," so that the unlearned hearer might be able to say Amen to the giving of thanks; for that otherwise the speakers and hearers would be as barbarians to one another.* If, in defiance of this, the Corinthian Church had adopted a rule, rendered imperative by their local ecclesiastical authorities, by which the use of the cup in the Lord's supper was always confined to the officiating ministers of the church, and never extended to the congregation; and another rule, by which the most solemn services of the church in public worship were always conducted in a foreign and dead language; it would have been palpable contempt of the Apostles to have recognised that church as any longer an apostolical church.

II. I proceed in the second place to shew that regular unbroken succession from the Apostles, even if it could be *proved;* whatever collateral advantages it might boast, and whatever disturbing irregularities it might exclude, could not secure the stedfast continuance thus shewn to be indispensable in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship.

This seems to be susceptible of easy proof. St. Peter says, " There were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And

* 1 Cor. xiv. 11—19.

many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." (2 Pet. ii. 1—3.) Here false teachers, bringing in damnable heresies, and leading many into pernicious ways, are predicted; not strangers proved to be false by their want of succession, but persons in the succession; *among you*, the Apostle says, addressing the apostolical church. And St. Paul gives a similar prophetic warning to the overseers of the Ephesian Church: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. (Acts xx. 30.) This is corroborated by our Lord's address to that church a few years after. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Rev. ii. 2.) If the persons here referred to had not been in the succession, they could not have even pretended to be apostolic ministers, and no trial of them would have been required, they would have stood *ipso facto* convicted as pretenders; but being in the succession, their outward pretensions were good; and the faithful pastor who detected their inward falsehood is highly commended. And thus it appears,

that however important for various reasons of historical evidence, and to guard against various irregularities, succession from the Apostles by an outward and visible ordination may be; there is yet nothing in it which can with safety be depended upon, for the continuance in a church of apostolical truth in doctrine, or purity in practice.

There is nothing in it which can be depended upon for preservation from even personal apostacy. This was made too awfully plain at the fountain-head of christian ordination. If ever men were truly ordained to the christian ministry, those were so whom Christ himself ordained. In St. Mark, chap. iii. 14, it is written, "He ordained twelve;" and so little necessary connexion is there between ordination and the apostolical character of the persons ordained, that one of the twelve was a devil. Beware of false prophets, said the Lord. By their fruits ye shall know them. (St. Matt. vii.) Suppose a presbyter able to trace clearly his ordination or mission from the Apostles who derived theirs from Christ; what then? Judas was ordained by Christ himself. Suppose a bishop (say the Bishop of Rome) to make out his case of apostolical succession; grant, for argument sake, that no link was broken, no step made void, by false pope, or antipope, or female pope,* but that he can shew his

* The story of Pope Joan is not a popular fiction as many seem to imagine; induced to that opinion probably not by any

ordination without a flaw from Christ himself: What then? Why then it may still be said to him, "The son of perdition" (St. John xvii. 12) was ordained by Christ himself, and therefore we may

historical evidence, but by the grossness of the tale itself; but it is a well-authenticated fact.

This extraordinary woman, concealing her sex, of course, contrived so to win all hearts and voices during the pontificate of Leo IV., that upon the death of that pontiff, she was, without a dissentient voice, raised to the chair of St. Peter.

Platina, in his lives of the popes, gives the following account of this transaction.

(Baptista Platina, or Bartolomeo Sanchi, was born at Piadena, near Mantua, 1421, and died at Rome, being then librarian to Pope Sixtus IV., 1481, æt. 60.)

"Johannes Anglicus, ex Maguntiaco oriundus, malis artibus (ut aiunt) pontificatum adeptus est. Mentitus enim sexum, cum fœmina esset, adolescens admodum Athenas cum amatore viro docto proficiscitur: ibique præceptores bonarum artium audiendo tantum profecit, ut Roman veniens, paucos admodum etiam in sacris literis pares haberet, nedum superiores. Legendo autem et disputando docte et acute, tantum benevolentiæ et auctoritatis sibi comparavit, ut mortuo Leone in ejus locum (ut Martinus ait) omnium consensu pontifex crearetur. Verum postea a servo compressa, cum aliquandiu occulte ventrem tulisset, tandem dum ad lateranensem basilicam proficisceretur, inter theatrum (quod Coloseum vocant, a Neronis colosso) et sanctum Clementem, doloribus circumventa peperit: eoq. loci mortua, pontificatus sui anno secundo, mense uno, diebus quatuor, sine ullo honore sepelitur. Sunt qui ob hæc scribant pontificem ipsum quando ad lateranensem basilicam proficiscitur, detestandi facinoris causa, et viam illam consulto declinare, et ejusdem vitandi erroris causa, dum primo in sede petri collocatur, ad eam rem perforata, genitalia ab ultimo diacono attrectari. De primo non abnuerim, de

grant your ordination, according to your own shewing, and yet still call you and believe you to be "a son of perdition," if we find his marks upon you, if we find you like Demas loving this present world, (2 Tim. iv. 10,) or like Diotrephes desiring to have the pre-eminence, (3 John 9,) or like Judas betraying your Master with a kiss.

St. Paul describes true ministers of the christian church as "workers together with God." (2 Cor. vi. 1.) This supplies one of the simplest tests for discrimination. For what hath God done? He has given all Scripture by divine inspiration, and declared it to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Tim. iii. 16.) He has commanded, saying, "Search the Scriptures." (St. John v. 39.) And "Thou shalt teach my words diligently unto thy children; and

secundo ita sentio, sedem illam ad id paratum esse, ut qui in tanto magistratu constituitur, sciat se non deum, sed hominem esse: et necessitatibus naturæ, utpote egerendi subjectum esse, unde merito stercoraria sedes vocatur. Hac qui dixi vulgo feruntur, incertis tamen et obscuris autoribus: quæ ideo ponere breviter et nude institui, ne obstinate nimium et pertinaciter omisisse videar, quod fere omnes affirmant: erremus etiam nos hac in re cum vulgo, quanquam appareat, ea quæ dixi, ex his esse, quæ fieri posse creduntur. Sunt qui dicant hujus temporibus beati Vincentii corpus e Valentia citerioris Hispaniæ civitate, a quodam monacho in pagum albiensem ulterioris Galliæ deportatum. Dicunt præterea Lotharium jam grandem natu, sumpto monachorum habitu, filium Ludovicum imperatorem reliquisse, qui statim in Germaniam provinciam rediens, omnes ad arma spectantes sua præsentia in officio continuit."

thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (Deut. vi. 1—9.)

Now if we see an ordained minister commending the Scriptures, explaining the Scriptures, endeavouring, by judicious, patient, and persevering efforts, that men, women, and children may have opportunity "to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the contents of the sacred volume; here we see a "worker together with God," and in this particular at least, an apostolical minister according to St. Paul's description of such.

On the other hand, if we see an ordained minister, whether bishop or presbyter, opposing the reading of the Scriptures by the people generally, on the plea that through the ignorance of the people, and the obscurity of the Scripture, more injury than benefit will arise from it; if we see him objecting to the children of his people being taught the Scriptures in the schools; if we know of his interference to prevent the attendance of his people at scriptural readings; if, as in one remarkable instance, we find him commending the zeal of the peasant who put a Bible in the fire, and enlarging in terms of high approbation on the orthodox horror of a contaminating touch, which induced that peasant to take the vile thing in the tongs rather than his fingers. Do we here recognise a "worker *together* with God" or a worker *against* God? Do we here recognise a successor of Peter, who earnestly commended the Scriptures as a light to which the

people did well to take heed; and exhorted all the faithful, "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby;" (2 Pet. i. 19; 1 Pet. ii. 2); or do we not rather recognise here a successor of Judas, who betrayed his Master and his cause through worldly ambition? Peter and Judas had the same ordination. It is not by their mission in visible succession that ye shall know the true "ambassadors for Christ" from the false, but by their fruits.

If this be so, what becomes of the vaunted *infallibility* of the church? In whom, and in the virtue of what, does it reside?

On this point, Romish controversialists are fond of referring to the analogy between the Jewish and Christian churches.

(1.) The Jewish church had a charter of divine authority, invested in a regularly constituted council or ecclesiastical court, consisting of priests with the high priest at their head. All matters of controversy were to be referred to that tribunal. The decisions of that tribunal were final; and if any of the people were at any time so refractory as not to submit to those decisions, such rebels were to be put to death. This charter is thus expressed in the word of the Lord: "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and

stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel; and all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously." * This was decisive.

(2.) The Jewish church had an assurance of the divine presence always dwelling with her. The Lord said, "I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And *I will dwell* among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they

* Deut. xvii. 8—13.

shall know that I am the Lord their God that brought them out of the land of Egypt, *that I may dwell among them.*" * This was referred to long after as being continuously fulfilled and never to be lost sight of. Thus the prophet Haggai, addressing Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest after their return from the captivity in Babylon, says, "I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." †

(3.) The Jewish church had plain and reiterated promises of divine protection: such as this, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." ‡

These all have been made the basis of an argument from analogy, to prove the divine authority and infallible decisions of the christian church. Shall the church guides under the old law, it is asked, have such authority and such infallibility; and shall not those under the new law have as much? Shall the Jewish church have such assurances of the abiding presence of her God; and shall not the christian church have at least the same? Shall the church under types and shadows which were ready to vanish

* Exod. xxix. 44—46. † Haggai ii. 4, 5.

‡ Isai. liv. 17.

away, have such satisfying promises of the divine protection; and shall not the church, under the everlasting and unchanging light of the gospel, have even more?

Such is the line of argument adopted in this question; not by irresponsible individuals only, but under the sanction of the highest authorities in the Roman Church. On the passage in Deuteronomy above cited, the following annotation occurs in the Douay Bible. I quote from an edition, "authorised by the Right Rev. N. Gibson, Vicar Apostolic of the Northern district: revised and corrected by the Revs. T. Robinson and Vincent Glover."

"Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the church guides of the Old Testament, in deciding, without appeal, all controversies relating to the law, promising that they should not err therein,—*punishing with death all who proudly refuse to obey their decisions;* and surely he has not done less with the church guides of the New Testament."*

* In other editions this note has been modified. I now transcribe from one printed in Belfast in 1839, and published "with the approbation of the Right Rev. Dr. Denvir." In this the note appears thus, the clause "punishing with death all who proudly refuse to obey their decisions" being suppressed.

"Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the church guides of the Old Testament, in deciding without appeal, all controversies relating to the law, promising that they should not err therein; and surely he has not done less for the church guides of the New Testament."

Proceeding then to particulars, the parallel is thus filled up.

(1.) The charter of divine authority given to the christian church, is found in the words of the Lord Jesus to his disciples, when he said, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." And again, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."*

(2.) The assurance of the divine presence with the christian church, is found in the Lord's parting words immediately previous to his ascension. "Lo! I am with you always even to the end of the world." And again, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you—If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and *make our abode with him.*"†

(3.) The promise of divine protection to the christian church, is found in the words of Jesus to Simon Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."‡

The parallel is complete; and Roman Catholic writers are fond of urging and enlarging upon it, as the ground of the alleged scriptural authority and covenanted infallibility of the christian church, to decide all controversies, and to punish even with

* St. Luke x. 16. St. John xiii. 20.

† St. Matt. xxviii. 20. St. John xiv. 18, 23.

‡ St. Matt. xvi. 18.

death—when this can be done with safety to the faithful—all refractory and obstinate heretics. It is a fruitful theme. All who impugn the decisions or resist the authority of the church, and all who excite others so to do, are described as partaking in the rebellion, and therefore well deserving of the fate of Dathan and Abiram; while all schismatics who violate the church's unity are represented as most justly incurring the punishment which fell on king Jeroboam.

This is, in no ordinary degree, imposing; but now let us try the application of it. And here the Jewish part of the subject becomes highly instructive, because of certain facts, of a very unequivocal character, which have occurred in the history of the Jewish church.

The divine commandment was, as we have seen, that in matters of controversy appeal should be made to the great ecclesiastical council under the presidency of the high priest for the time being; and that the sentence there delivered should be considered final. Under this charter, the council so constituted, claimed for their decisions, all the infallibility of a divine sentence; and in the outset, in the days of Moses and Joshua, they were actually guided by express communications from heaven. These were given sometimes in audible words from the Lord, sometimes by the Urim and Thummim in the consecrated breastplate of the high priest. Afterwards, when such communications ceased, how

often, and under what circumstances the Jewish ecclesiastical council exercised their authority, we have no means of knowing, because no special cases of reference to them are cited in the sacred narrative.

Still they had the abiding assurance of the divine presence, "I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts; according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you;" and at last we do meet with a case, a remarkable case of a controversy which arose at Jerusalem, and was referred to the great church council, with the high priest at its head. It was the controversy which arose upon the claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This claim was warmly espoused by some, and as vehemently denied and resisted by others; the whole city was moved; and after several discussions in the streets, in the temple, and elsewhere, the matter was brought before the proper tribunal. "They led Jesus away to the high priest, and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders, and the scribes."* Here was the great ecclesiastical council of the Jewish church, in the regular Aaronic and Levitical succession from the days of Moses; and doubtless there were many among the Jewish people who regarded the authoritative decisions of that council as the expression, without risk of error, of the mind of God. Doubt-

* St. Mark xiv. 53.

less there were many ready to plead the language of Moses and the prophets, as well as the traditions of their fathers, in support of the infallibility of their church.

Facts speak. To the high priest's first address Jesus answered nothing. His accusers were heard; and then the high priest said, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I AM: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said, what need we any further witnesses, ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." *

They all condemned him to be guilty of death! Such was the unanimous decision of this council, the catholic consent of this infallible church; that instead of being the Son of God indeed, as he said he was, Jesus was an impostor, and advanced his pretensions with such arrogancy as amounted to blasphemy. By their law, death was the punishment of the convicted blasphemer, and thus they arrived at the conclusion, and gave forth the sentence that the prisoner at their bar was guilty of death.

This brings the matter to a crisis. If they were

* St. Mark xiv. 60—64.

right, forming their judgment under divine influence, and coming to a decision in accordance with the mind of God, then Jesus was not the Messiah the Son of the Blessed, but an arrogant blasphemer. On the other hand, if Jesus was indeed the Christ, then their decision was fatally wrong. If their decision was right, what is to be said of Christianity? If their decision in such a matter was wrong, what is to be said of ecclesiastical infallibility?

Now we know that their decision was wrong; and their descendants, even the whole nation, have been enduring the bitter consequences of it, from that day until now. According to their dreadful imprecation, his blood has been upon them and upon their children, in the way of still unexpiated vengeance.*

What then becomes of the infallibility of their church? Such an interpretation of their charter, as would represent infallibility as inherent in their great ecclesiastical council, whatever might be the character of its members, must be relinquished. The fact now before us, compels us so to interpret their charter, as to render it compatible with their fatal mistake. Were they *partially* right in their decision, and can any limitation or explanation be found on that side? No! They were utterly wrong, and the explanation must be wholly on the other side. To what end, then, it may be asked, were the statutes and judgments to be observed by the Jewish people, given in such copious detail as we find them

* St Matt. xxvii. 25.

in the *Books* of Moses? To what end were the miraculous communications by Urim and Thummim circumstantially *recorded?* Chapter after chapter is occupied with statutes and ordinances, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, involving general principles and entering into the most minute particulars. It is an obvious inquiry, where was the object of all this, and of commanding the people to attend to it all, and teach their children to attend to it all, if there was a living tribunal among them, invested with absolute authority to decide?

Moses, recapitulating before his death, and referring the people of Israel to all that had been said and done during his wondrous ministry among them, said, "These are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go in to possess it; that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine

heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." *

This would have been vain and useless, if the authority given to the ecclesiastical council, and guaranteed to their legitimate successors, had been *absolute*. Here, therefore, we find the true limitation, a right understanding of which will harmonise the charter of the church with the facts of the history.

The authority vested in the church council was not absolute, but relative. It was not given *alone*, but in company with, and of course with reference to, the written law. He who gave authority to the council, gave also laws to the people. The authority was not legislative to originate laws of its own, neither was it arbitrary to decide without laws; but it was executive of the laws which God had given. Thus the Jewish church had all the advantages for energy and discipline to be derived from an executive government invested with substantial power; while, at the same time, they had all the security against tyranny or caprice which is derived from a written and published charter. It was possible for the executive government to lose sight of

* Deut. vi. 1—9.

part or parts of the charter, and to do wrong. It is a fact that they did do wrong, to the extent of denying and crucifying the Lord of glory. They did wrong, not only with reference to the person of Jesus whom they knew not, but also with reference to one of their own plainly written laws. It was written in their law that no man should be condemned unless upon the agreeing testimony of at least two witnesses.* The witnesses against Jesus did not agree. "They sought witnesses to put him to death, but found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none,"† *i. e.* none to put him to death, none whose testimony agreed one with the other. In defiance of this, they proceeded to condemn him to death.

It was not the duty of any man in Jerusalem to submit to such a decision. The authority of their church council was under limitation to a written law, and when that law was violated, the ecclesiastical executive forfeited their own charter.

It is no answer to this to say that the prisoner pleaded guilty, and that consequently no further witness was required. The assertion that he was the Christ, the Son of the blessed, was not *prima facie*, and of necessity, false. They themselves were expecting the Messiah to appear. The person then before them *might* be he. When he said I AM, they presumed and prejudged him guilty; but before

* Deut. xvii. 6. † St. Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.

they could lawfully find him guilty, they should have lawfully proved that his assertion was false. To pronounce upon the assertion itself, by whomsoever made, that it was, in itself, blasphemy, was in fact to pronounce that Messiah could never come. They are, therefore, fully open to the charge of having proceeded without proof and without witnesses to condemn a man contrary to the law.

The parallel in this point with the christian church is indeed complete, and highly instructive; an executive government under limitation of a written charter!

The Jewish church for a time decided with infallible truth, guided by the miraculous communications vouchsafed from "Him who dwelled between the cherubims;" but when her written code of instructions and precedents was complete, and those miraculous communications were withheld, she went wrong, fatally wrong; that is, as to her outward and visible part, comprising the national bulk of the circumcised community. There was indeed an election in that community, and they were kept right, but as St. Paul expresses it, *the rest were blinded.*

The Christian church for a time decided with infallible truth, guided by the plenary inspiration given to her apostolical council. They bound on earth what is bound in heaven, and loosed on earth what is loosed in heaven, without the possibility of mistake; but when her written code was completed, and plenary inspiration withheld, it became possible

for her to go wrong. It was only by constant and dutiful attention to her written law, that her living executive could be kept right.

The parallel does not prove that the christian church actually has gone wrong; but it proves, that notwithstanding her high charter of divine authority, her assurance of her Lord's abiding presence, and his promises of final and indefeasible security; the christian church, as to her outward and visible part, comprising the bulk of the baptized communities, *may* go wrong, fatally wrong, even to the extent of crucifying the Lord afresh, and putting him to an open shame. This throws open the inquiry, as to whether the visible christian church has gone wrong or not. Her charter of divine authority cannot, with justice, be pleaded in arrest of all inquiry; and they who still maintain her infallibility, must relinquish analogy with the Jewish church as the ground of their argument, and defend their position on some other grounds.

To what end has the Old Testament been preserved, the New Testament composed, and both circulated? To what end are the members of the christian church commanded to read the scriptures, and commended for searching the scriptures? To what end did one Apostle say, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say," and another, "Try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world," and another, "We have a more sure word of prophecy,

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place?" Why all this, if there be a living infallible tribunal to put an end to all controversies and all doubts, to speak light, giving the mind of God, and that absolutely? But all this is beautifully harmonious, if church authority be an executive authority—executive of a written law, not legislative, not arbitrary; restrained from lording it over God's heritage, and at the same time most usefully efficient for all the ready purposes of living energy, and scriptural discipline, preserving order and decorum, and subordination.

If it be objected, that this, after all, leaves the practical question in every instance open, bringing in the exercise of private opinion, and making the members of the church judges as to whether the executive government have or have not transgressed the written law: I answer, why not? Why were reason and conscience and immortality given to the members of the church? Of what is the church, as a body, composed, but of individual members? And how can responsibility attach to the aggregate, but by attaching to each of the constituent parts? Christianity, in its written code, treats men as individuals: *He* that believeth, is its language, and *he* that believeth not, let *him* that heareth understand, to *him* that overcometh will I give; *one* shall be taken and *another* left; and God shall render to *every* man according to his works. It is as individuals we must stand in the judgment of God, ac-

cording to the opportunities, talents, and circumstances of each: and therefore upon us, as individuals, devolves now the solemn, the awfully responsible duty of a conscientious use of all our opportunities and talents; and herein pre-eminently, of all our hearing and reading on the subject of religion. It becomes those in authority to beware how they command; and it becomes those under authority to beware how they disobey. But to lodge absolute irresponsible authority in some men would be inconsistent with human frailty; and to require the prostration of unexamining obedience from other men, would be inconsistent with human liberty. He who knows what is in man, and judgeth righteously, has done neither of these inconsistent things.

III. Thus, thirdly, in tracing the true apostolicity of the church, the line of succession will not suffice as a trustworthy conductor; because on that line we may possibly find wolves in sheep's clothing, devouring the flock, men of corrupt minds and reprobate concerning the truth, to whom gain is godliness, false teachers bringing in damnable heresies: on that line we may find also, men who love to have the pre-eminence, and who thereupon reject the supremacy of apostolical instructions, and elevate their own inventions, or the traditions of their fathers, into the highest place.

If, therefore, we would trace apostolicity, not in name and in word, but in deed and in truth, we

must look for stedfast continuance in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. In other words, we must look among spiritual men; because the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles include what St. Paul calls "the things of the Spirit of God," and he tells us, with unequivocal plainness, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

This fundamental truth demands the most careful attention. It is of no private interpretation. It is neither local nor temporary: neither confined to the apostolic age in which it was written, nor to the Corinthian church to whom it was originally addressed. It is a truth universal and eternal, the natural man, that is, to use the language of our church article, "man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam," and not yet born again of the Spirit of God: whatever his station in life may be, whatever may be his natural talents, or the extent of his acquired knowledge, whatever may be the aspect of his natural character, whatever things his mind may be able to receive and appreciate and discuss—things of business, of art, of literature, of science—he cannot wisely discuss, he cannot duly appreciate, nay he cannot at all receive, the things of the Spirit of God. He cannot embrace the doctrine, or enjoy the fellowship of the Apostles, and therefore he cannot be a living member of, though he may apparently belong to, an apostolic body.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

It may seem at first sight that, admitting this to be a truth, no practical good can be reasonably expected to result from making it prominent and insisting upon it. It wears a discouraging aspect, and we may be asked if you wish to stir men to valuable exertion, why throw such a dead weight as this upon them?

Our answer is, first, that instead of waiting for a reason to obey what God has commanded, we hail, in the fact that he has commanded it, the best possible reason why we should obey; as instead of waiting for a reason to believe what God has revealed, we hail, in the fact that he has revealed it, the best possible reason why we should believe.

And our answer is, secondly, that being truly anxious to stir up man to valuable exertion in the service of God, and knowing that he is naturally inclined, when he exerts himself at all, to exert himself in a wrong direction, in a way wherein he can do nothing valuable, but where every thing that seems valuable is really deceitful in itself and eventually destructive in its consequences, we do most reasonably begin by setting up a barrier at the entrance of that fatal road. The truth now before us is such a barrier; it separates at once and for ever true religion, from natural exertion, whether of mind or body or both; and it throws every one who is assured of it into a posture of dependence upon supernatural aid. This is a grand point. When this is done indeed, though the victory cannot be said to be actually won,

it may truly be said to be eventually certain. Prostration in the dust is fallen man's first, best, and safest step towards heaven. It is upon his knees, looking unto Jesus, that he receives, and learns the use of wings to fly into the bosom of God!

Let no reader marvel, then, if we insist upon this truth when tracing the true apostolicity of the christian church. It is not readily acknowledged, especially by the wise and prudent of this world; and a high branch of the high calling of Christ's ministers is, to present it with true heavenly wisdom and prudence to various minds in various scriptural aspects, and to commend it by sound arguments and explanatory distinctions, if God peradventure will give repentance and humility, to the cordial acknowledgment of it. Such arguments and distinctions will be found to throw much light upon the Holy Scriptures in sundry places.

The natural man's inability to receive the things of the Spirit of God must be considered in its twofold source. He must be contemplated as a creature, and as a fallen creature. As a creature his understanding is finite, and as a fallen creature his affections are corrupt. The things of the Spirit of God are great and good: too great for a finite understanding, too good for corrupt affections. These are combined in the Apostle's discussion of this great subject; and much clearness results from keeping them distinctly in view. In the first chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthian Church, St. Paul tells us

he was sent to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words after the manner of the various schools of the philosophers, with their abstract reasonings and logical deductions, appealing in the last resort to human wisdom as the judge of all possible truth. Those who did so could not, of course, announce anything above human reason; and had he done so he must have obscured the Cross of Christ so as to make it of no effect; for the Cross of Christ, by which he plainly means the whole revelation of the Gospel, contains much that, instead of commending itself as wisdom to fallen men, is rejected by them as foolishness. It contains the things of the Spirit of God, too great for the creature to receive, too good for the fallen creature to relish. The Godhead containing in itself personal resources for the wondrous work of redemption—the sovereignty of the Father in appointing that work before the world was—the incarnation of the eternal Word by the power of the co-eternal Spirit, and of the substance of a fallen woman—the experience of Christ in the flesh—the substitution of one for many—the obedience of one counted to many—the sufferings of one accepted for many—the resurrection of one the victory of many—the gracious love manifested in all this, from heaven—the holy love produced by all this, upon earth—these are too great for man as a *man*, and too good for man as a *sinner*. They are indeed "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation;" and by men who are saved they are

recognized as such, but by the natural man they are considered foolishness. The Apostle was fully aware that this was the case. It had, indeed, been a theme of prophecy, for it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this word? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor i. 19—29.)

The Apostle did not attempt to disguise or with-

hold the mysterious truth, because of such reception among men. He knew indeed, and declared, that left to themselves, they could not receive this; but he knew, at the same time, and declared, that whatever else they might receive, they could not be saved unless they received this; and concerning himself and others who had received this, he declared that they had not been left to themselves. He excludes the eye, the ear, the heart of man as the source of divine knowledge, and declares that God is the revealer of himself in man by his Spirit. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 12.)

The Spirit of God meets man's necessity in both its parts, as he is a creature, and as he is a fallen creature. As he is a creature with a finite understanding, the Spirit reconciles him to willing acquiescence in his remaining ignorance of many things. It does indeed teach him much, and leads him on higher and higher in the saving knowledge of God the Father and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; but beneath the deep things so taught, there are deeper things which no finite mind can fathom; and

the Holy Spirit leads the Christian not only to cease to murmur and object because of mysteries, but sweetly to enjoy his position as a creature, finishing in adoring praise the contemplations which have begun in intelligent holy love.

As a fallen creature with corrupt affections, communicating a baleful bias to his mind, the Spirit meets his necessity by renewing his affections, and shedding abroad the love of God, the constraining love of Christ, in his heart. This is the basis of true apostolicity in a man, and therefore in a church, which is composed of men. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."*

But further: it is not merely that which was manifestly sinful in the natural man which is changed by this process, but all that was apparently religious also is changed. There is much that is apparently religious in the natural man. A consciousness of guilt, an acknowledgment of immortality, a sense of duty towards God and towards man, a zeal for those parts of duty which either do not interfere with natural corruptions, or are supposed to be substitutions for punishment incurred by the indulgence of those corruptions; these exist in various degrees in different countries and in different men. But they may be truly said to be natural to men. The natural man can and does receive them; but he receives them, and judges of them, and is influenced by them

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

on natural principles, according to the covenant of works, which neither he nor any who have gone before him can fulfil. Viewing things in the light of that covenant he can approve of the practical duties of religion; he honestly and perhaps zealously approves of them; and therefore he feels himself libelled when he is told that he cannot receive or approve of the things of the Spirit of God. And yet this is true. He approves of the duties considered in themselves, but he does not approve of the position which those duties hold in the covenant of grace; the only position in which they are well pleasing unto God, however well pleased with their outward performance natural men may be. In the covenant of grace every duty has a peculiar relationship to the merits and mediation of Christ, and to the indwelling efficiency of the Holy Ghost. It is in this relationship alone that they are accepted of God; and it is precisely in this relationship that they are refused by the natural man and nauseated as enthusiasm. Let duties be presented as conditions of salvation, according to the covenant of works, "This do and thou shalt live," and the natural man can receive the saying. He cannot indeed perform the work according to the tenor of the covenant without a flaw, but he can receive and approve of the doctrine, a doctrine which condemns himself. Like the Jews of old, "he has one that accuses him, even Moses in whom he trusts."* But let duties be

* St. John v. 45.

presented as gifts of God, "of whose only gift it cometh that his faithful people do or can do any laudable service," according to the covenant of grace; Jesus Christ exalted a prince and a saviour to give repentance and faith; the Holy Ghost sent as an indweller to work all our works in us; ourselves God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in; and then the natural man rejects the doctrine, a doctrine wherein alone there is salvation.

True Christianity consists of the things of the Spirit of God; and if the natural man cannot receive those things, what must become of Christianity? It must be confined to spiritual men! Clearly and undeniably so. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* But the *profession* of Christianity is not and never has been confined to spiritual men, neither is that profession in every case a hypocritical profession. In many thousands of instances it is perfectly sincere. But how can this be? How can natural men be sincere in a profession of Christianity? In order to render this possible, there must be some things in what they consider Christianity which are not the things of the Spirit of God. Such has been the fact. Instead of natural men always and uniformly rejecting Christianity as a thing too spiritual for them, they have invented, or borrowed from

* Rom. viii. 9.

heathens, or Jews, or both, a carnal system, and called it Christianity. A few particulars here will shew how a church with "a name to live"* has continued, while genuine apostolicity was abandoned.

(1.) Among the things of the Spirit of God, the objects of true apostolical religion, the chief and most important of all is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is the sun of the system, the first and the last. Is God the subject? He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person," the sender also of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Is creation the subject? His is the power by which it sprang into being; he is the base upon which it all rests; "in him all things consist." Is the church the subject? He is the head. Is pardon the subject? He is the purchaser of it by his blood. Is righteousness before God the subject? He is the performer of it in his life. Is faith the subject? He is the author and finisher of it. Is hell the subject? He is the only refuge from it. Is heaven the subject? He is the light and glory of it.

In his Godhead he is invisible; in his manhood he is absent. How then is he to be presented to men that they may receive him? He is presented to our faith in the Word, by the Spirit. (St. John xvi. 13—15, and xx. 31.) To spiritual men this is effectual. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) But what are

* Apoc. iii. 1.

natural men to do with all this? They cannot receive it. While it is genuine in itself it is foolishness unto them; there is "no form nor comeliness" in it, no power, no beauty, no glory in it to their minds, that they should admire it. They have no capacity for it. It is music indeed, but they have no spiritual ear; it is meat indeed, but they have no spiritual hunger; it is drink indeed, but they have no spiritual thirst. What is to be done, then? Shall they resist and reject it altogether? Either this or corrupt it. What has been done? They have corrupted it, and debased it down to a thing which the natural man could receive; they have represented the Lord Jesus Christ in his incarnation, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension to *the eyes* of men. Instead of "speaking the truth" that "faith might come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," they have managed to do without faith, by presenting Christ in gold, silver, and ivory, wood, stone, and painted canvass. These are things of the senses of men, not of the Spirit of God. These the natural man can receive; these they have received; these they miscall Christianity, and the church which deals in these things they miscall an apostolical church.

(2.) The worship of God, under the ministration of the Spirit in the Gospel, is beautiful and glorious; but its beauty is the beauty of holiness, and its glory is a glory of spirituality. In this it *excelleth* in glory, the Old Testament ministration.

(See 2 Cor. iii. 7, 11.) The object is, the invisible God, the medium the invisible Saviour, the agent the Holy Ghost. "Through him, Christ, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."* In this glory it excels. In anything external or visible it does not excel or equal the old. What comparison is there between the worship in Lydia's house or Paul's lodgings; and the worship in Solomon's temple or Aaron's tabernacle? In dress, in pomp, in show, in all that is received by the senses of the natural man, which excelled? The old. But in true spirituality, in all that is appreciated by the hearts of apostolic men, which excelled? The new. This is satisfactory to spiritual men; but what are natural men to do with all this? They cannot receive it. While it is genuine in itself, it is foolishness to them. What was to be done, then? Should they resist and reject it altogether? Either this or corrupt it. What has been done? They have corrupted it, and debased it down to what the natural man can receive; they have made christian worship, as they call it, to consist in varied and gorgeous dresses and decorations, postures of the body, sprinklings of the flesh with water falsely called holy, and soft sounds of elaborate music exciting the imagination, and creating the deceitful appearance of devotional feeling.

(3.) The great distinguishing doctrines of Christianity concerning sin and the pardon of sin are

* Eph. ii. 18.

spiritual. Sin is the transgression of the law. The law is spiritual, holy, and just, and good. The penalty of transgression is death. The life of the flesh is in the blood. Without death, without shedding of blood, is no remission. Only Christ, God, and man, honours the law and suffers the penalty; and as he only, so he perfectly, exclusively, and finally, once for all. In him there is no condemnation; out of him there is nothing but condemnation. This is received by faith, and to spiritual men it is satisfactory. (Rom. iii. passim, and viii. 1; Heb. ix. and x.; James ii. 10.) But what are natural men to make of all this? They cannot receive it. While it is genuine, its principles are foolishness to them. What was to be done then? Reject or corrupt it. They have corrupted it down to the principles natural to men. Sin is dealt with, not as essentially opposed to God, but as in *measures injurious to man;* and pardon is dealt with in measures also. The sacrifice of Christ is acknowledged to be ineffectual, and as such is repeated, and in the repetition dramatized to the senses; and being still ineffectual to procure pardon of sin, as it must be if it needs repetition, penances are added, and pilgrimages and discipline, in things which the natural man can receive. All these are felt to be ineffectual. After experience of them all, conscience clamours still. What then? A final step is held out which it is confidently promised shall be effectual at last. This is equally carnal and ineffectual

in itself; and the delusion would be dissipated if this were open to the test of experience; therefore the time of it is postponed till after death, and as no one returns to tell of the disappointment, the imagination is kept up. And connected as it is declared to be with the continued suffrages and services of the church on earth, it is made the fruitful source of disgraceful traffic. When a sorcerer of old suggested a connexion between the payment of money, and the procuring of spiritual blessings, St. Peter said, with holy indignation, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."*

The contrast is painful with a church which boasts its descent from St. Peter, but which cannot for shame pretend to have inherited any portion of his holy indignation against trading in the things of the Spirit of God. How could the justice of the ancient proverb have been *felt*, in its application to Rome ecclesiastical, "Omnia Româ venalia," if Rome had continued an apostolical church?

It is sufficiently remarkable that where all these corruptions are most notorious, the high exclusive pretension to apostolicity is most vauntingly arrogated. Assuredly, however, the holy fellowship and uncorrupted doctrine of the Apostles are indispensable towards genuine apostolicity. Where these

* Acts viii. 20, 21.

are found, genuine members of the church of God in Christ are found; where these are obscured, the genuineness of the church is proportionably obscured; and where these are lost, Christianity itself is lost. For the want of these no outward succession can compensate, no pretence to authority, no claims to infallibility, not even the presence, if it existed, of supernatural gifts and miracles.

If it pleased Almighty God to allow real miracles to be wrought in avowed confirmation of false doctrine and unrighteous practice, it would not be to attest the claims of those who wrought the miracles, but to try the faith and constancy of those who believed the doctrine and practised righteousness. "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder; and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, (which thou hast not known,) and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." * What is here supposed and provided for under the Old Testament dispensation, is, in the New Testament, predicted as one of the trials of the christian church in the latter days. The wicked one who shall eventually be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's coming, shall in the meantime

* Deut. xiii. 1—3.

practise and prosper after the workings of Satan, "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." * There would be no deceivableness about an open enemy, but this wicked one is predicted as a professed friend, whose words are smooth as butter while a dagger is in his heart. He comes in the boasted apostolical succession, saying, "Lord, Lord," while he systematically makes void the commandments of the Lord. It is as Christ, *in nomine Domini*, that he comes; and "Behold," said Christ himself, "there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders,

* "2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. "La prediction de S. Paul dans la seconde epistre au Thessaloniens, chap. ii., achéve de s'accomplir dans l'Eglise de Rome. Car enfin, S. Anselme explique ce passage de l'Eglise Romaine, à cause des abus et des vices qui y regnent. Il y a des auteurs qui sont de ce meme sentiment. Je sçai bien aussi qu'on donne d'autres interpretations à cet endroit. Dieu veuille avoir pitié de nous, et ne nous punir pas autant que nos pechez le meritent." *Vargas*, p. 237. See also pp. 222, 230.

It was thus that a zealous Romanist, when under some compunctions of conscience, felt himself constrained to speak, while he was an eye and ear witness to the proceedings of the Council of Trent. Instead of allowing fair discussion in that notorious assembly, the pope's legate acted the part of an overbearing tyrant. "Le legat tâche de nous epouvanter, en parlant avec hauteur et fierté. Il traite les evêques come des esclaves: il menace, et il jure de s'en aller . . ." Ibid. p. 218. "Le concile ne peut rien faire par lui meme. On l'a depouillé de son autorité. Il n'y a point de liberté. Le legat est le maitre, il tient tout dans sa main." Ibid. p. 203.

insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect."* Where, then, shall we look for the apostolicity of the church? Not in Rome, as I have endeavoured to shew: not in Unitarianism either, in any of its modifications, Arian or Socinian, where the essential Godhead of the Saviour, and the vicarious character of his sacrifice, are explained away under cover of figurative language, or by the plausibilities of philosophy falsely so called. No; neither the Romanism which repeats the great sacrifice as still incomplete, nor the moralism which rejects it as unphilosophical; neither the superstition which multiplies sacraments, invents relics, and propagates "lies in hypocrisy," nor the abstraction which turns away from Christ's own appointments for the bodies of his worshippers, can expound the mind of God or meet the necessities of man. For the true apostolicity of the church of God we must look among those who repudiate both, and "receive with meekness the engrafted word," and nothing else, as God's communication for the salvation of men. Such persons, it is true, differ in many things one from another. Without a continued miracle controlling men's minds and hearts into a degree of similarity which has never yet charactized men's faces, no, not the faces of brothers, the sons of one mother, such disagreements cannot be avoided. They are the essential features of free and fallible sincerity; but they extend not to the vitals of the

* Matt. xxiv. 24.

body. The difficulty of drawing an exact line of demarcation between essentials and non-essentials, is freely admitted; still, the distinction itself is a good and true one; and salvation is nowhere said, of God, to depend upon the apostolical succession of ministers in a church, as it is distinctly said to depend on the full and true acknowledgment, reception, and enjoyment of the great comprehensive truth that "Jesus is the Christ," and that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Salvation is never said, of God, to depend on the episcopal government, liturgical services, or sacramental ordinances of a church, as it is said to depend on a new creation in Christ by the Holy Ghost unto good works.

I greatly prefer, because I think I can by fair inference maintain, the episcopal government of the christian church, but upon this and kindred topics I am not insensible to the arguments and inferences of others. Upon all such grounds we meet only Israelites, to whom the language of the Patriarch may well be addressed: "See that ye fall not out by the way, for ye are brethren."* And if we cannot so entirely agree as to continue in one company, then let patriarchal example show us how to separate as friends. "If thou wilt go to the right, I will go to the left; and if thou wilt go to the left, I will go to the right."† But when a fundamental falsehood presents itself, behold an Egyptian "kill him and bury him in the sand!"‡

* Gen. xlv. 24. † Gen. xiii. 9.

‡ Exod. ii. 11—13.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST. ITS SECURITY AND VISIBILITY.

What the security of the church does not mean—First, 2 Pet ii. 22. *Second,* St. Matt. vii. 22, 23. *Third,* Rev. iii. 1. *Fourth,* Rom. vii. 23 : Gal. v. 27—*What the security of the church does mean*—1 Pet. i. 5—*The rock St. Matt.* xvi. πετρος-πετρα —*Dr. Barrow's interpretation in answer to Bellarmine*——*Indefectibility of the church on earth, different from the security of the church against "the gates of hell"—The visibility of the church not yet—"The manifestation of the sons of God"—The resurrection of the body—Attempts to prove present visibility answered—Our Lord's prayer for the whole church,* St. John xvii.

In the light of holy scripture, our only infallible guide, we have been tracing the church of God in Christ; its component parts, its true catholicity, its unity, its holiness, its apostolical character: and we now proceed to consider its *security*, unto that day which St. Paul calls "the day of the Lord Jesus," and the day of "the manifestation of the sons of God;" when

the whole church shall stand forth in glorious *visibility;* the bodies of their humiliation being fashioned like unto the glorious body of their returning Lord. It is thus that the security and the visibility of the church are combined with one another, and both with the resurrection of the body.

Jesus said, "This is the father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (St. John vi. 39, 40.) In these words we have two descriptions of the members of the church of God; one, referring to the perfect purpose of God before the world was; the other, to the progressive fulfilment of that purpose in the world. And concerning the members of the church, thus variously described, the same assurances of security and resurrection are repeated.

In the former of these verses, the members of the church are thus described. "*All which he* (the Father) *hath given me.*" This refers to his "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Then follow the assurances of their security and resurrection. It is the Father's will that none of them should be lost, and it is the Son's determination to raise up every one of them at the last day.

In the latter verse they are described thus, "*Every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him.*" This

refers to the progressive fulfilment of the divine purpose, as each predestinated member is successively quickened to the personal exercise of the grace of faith. And then follow as before, assurances of their security and resurrection. It is the Father's will that every one of them should have everlasting life, and it is the Son's determination to raise up every one of them at the last day.

1. The truth first in order is the SECURITY of the church, and it will conduce to much clearness, to consider, first, what this great truth does not mean, and secondly what it does mean.

(1.) It does not mean that all persons who "profess and call themselves Christians," have everlasting life, and shall be surely preserved through this world, and saved in the next.

On the contrary, among those who call themselves and are by others commonly called Christians, there are multitudes who answer to the tares in the field where the wheat is also; to the bad fishes in the gospel net; to the guest without a wedding garment seated at the marriage supper. The Lord's servants gather together all, as many as they find, *both bad* and good, and the wedding is furnished with guests. It is not till the king comes to see them, that the distinction is made visible. (St. Matt. xxii. 10—14.) None of the king's servants can accurately distinguish between the genuine disciple and the deceiver; and therefore Christ said, "Let both grow together till

the harvest." *Then* indeed a separation shall be made between them, as wide as between the "heavenly garner," and "hell fire."

In the mean time, however, some of those who are only tares, make the melancholy fact but too manifest. Whatever outward decorum may have been observed for a time, circumstances arise which detect their unchanged hearts; they forsake the holy commandment delivered unto them; and by plunging into worldly corruptions they verify and illustrate the disgusting images presented by that true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 22.)

Such falls, especially when they have been preceded by a creditable course of some duration, incur the reproach of the church's enemies, darken the truths of the church's security, and excite perplexing anxieties and apprehensions in some of the real and true members of the church. It should, however, be carefully noticed, that such things are plainly provided for in the scriptures, that we are repeatedly warned of their inevitable occurrence; and that none of them, however grievous and however multiplied, interfere in the slightest degree with the great truth of the security of the church of God.

It is thus, and, as it appears to me, only thus that the scriptural predictions of apostacy among professors, can be harmonized with the scriptural assurances of security to all true believers. To allege that such

predictions * were uttered concerning persons who *may* be saved, is to accuse God of prophesying falsely; and to allege that such assurances † were given concerning persons who *may* be lost, is equally to accuse God of false promises. But "*distinguite personas, et concordabunt scripturæ.*"

(2.) This truth does not mean, that all persons who have had eminent gifts, even miraculous, and who in the exercise of those gifts have been eminently useful, and greatly distinguished amongst men; have everlasting life, and shall be surely preserved.

On the contrary, the most wonderful gifts may be in full exercise, where there is no real grace. They have been, and may be bestowed on persons who are not members of the church of God; and who may therefore at any time make shipwreck of their profession, and be engulphed in the corruptions of this wicked world. Of this distinction St. Paul writes with animating earnestness." After commending *gifts* for their appropriate uses, he announces "a more excellent way," and then enlarges on that *love* which is inseparable from saving grace. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love"—αγαπη—compare 1 John iv. 7, 8. "God is love"—αγαπη—"I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all (miracle

* 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. † St. John x. 27—30.

working) faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. xii. 31 and xiii. 1, 3.)

What the Apostle thus states as a general experimental truth of universal application, our Lord himself makes awfully solemn by a startling prophecy that in many instances, thus indeed it shall be. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (St. Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

But what then? Miraculous gifts have indeed been bestowed upon false professors of Christianity, but no member of the Lord's body has been amputated; no bone of him has been broken; and nothing has occurred to interfere in the least degree, with the everlasting and indefeasible security of the church of God in Christ.

(3.) This truth does not mean, that all visible churches, at any time possessing scriptural truth, enjoying scriptural worship, and living in scriptural practice, shall continue to do so, while the individuals composing them change by births and deaths, from generation to generation.

On the contrary. The candlestick (which is the Lord's own emblem for a visible church) may be removed from any place, however brightly the light of truth may have shone upon it in time past. In

point of fact, many have been removed; and the word of God contains no promise of security to any of those which still remain. The candlestick may remain, and the true bright light upon it, a visible church witnessing for the Lord in her constitution and doctrine, and containing a goodly proportion of the Lord's true children among her members: or the light may be removed, and the candlestick only in name and appearance remain: or both may be removed, and not even the name of Christian left behind.

When the Lord Jesus addressed the seven churches of Asia, Ephesus had the candlestick and the light also; and the light was pure and brilliant, save only that He who seeth not as man seeth, perceived a slight decline from its original brightness, and reproved that departure from first love.

Sardis had the candlestick, but the light was gone, or so nearly gone, that addressing her in the aggregate the Lord said, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead,"* a name that thou livest! the appearance externally and the reputation among men of being still a christian church, having visible ordinances, and an ecclesiastical constitution; abundantly satisfactory doubtless to the vast majority of the members, who would have deemed it an unwarrantable and uncharitable calumny to deny their spiritual life: but He whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and out of whose mouth goeth a sharp two-

* Rev. iii. 1.

edged sword said to them, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and *art dead.*"

There were indeed a few in Sardis who had not defiled their garments, but the body as such was dead.

Since that time, not the light of life only, but the candlestick itself, even the name of Christian, has been removed from many places where churches flourished. Jerusalem herself is trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the crescent of the false prophet of Arabia waves triumphantly where once a Christian candlestick exhibited apostolical light. Antioch also, where the disciples were first called Christians, is utterly forsaken. Rome, like Sardis, has the candlestick still, but the pure light is extinguished; or so nearly so, by the accumulated incrustations of human traditions, that she may well be addressed as Sardis was, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and *art dead.*"

There are indeed a few even in Rome, who have not defiled their garments, and to them the Lord says, "Come out of her my people," but to herself, *thou art dead.*

But what then? The true light has emigrated, but not one spark which the Lord has kindled indeed, has been, or can be, finally extinguished.

Thus the fall and ruin and utter removal of true Christianity, or of even the profession and name of Christianity, from one city and country after another,

does not interfere in the least degree with the security of the church of God in Christ.

(4.) This truth does not mean that all the true members of the church of God shall be preserved through the remainder of their lives from all lapses into sin, or what the prophet Jeremiah calls "backslidings," or from all spiritual darkness and desertion as to their present enjoyment of God.

On the contrary, the most spiritual among them are forced to feel, that while they delight in the law of God after the inward man, there is another law in their members warring against the law of the mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members. (Rom. vii. 23.) "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that they cannot do the things that they would." (Gal. v. 17.)

Sometimes, alas! they do the things they would not, and incur those gracious chastenings from their heavenly Father which restore them, and prevent them from being condemned with the world. So St. Paul speaks, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.) Condemned we deserve to be, and condemned we most assuredly would be, if left to ourselves; but the sure promise of God to each of the members of his dear Son is, "I will never leave thee, nor for-

sake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.) The plain unequivocal language of the Apostle concerning every one who is truly in Christ Jesus, is, that " there is no condemnation to him;" that he has " the blessedness of the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;" of the man " to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" of the man " unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And the conclusive argument which the Apostle grounds upon the blessedness so bestowed is, " If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, *much more*, being reconciled, *we shall be saved* by his life." (Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8; v. 10; viii. 1.)

God exercises his saving powers in his children by giving them a penitent susceptibility to sin. His new creation in them is of so delicate a texture, that although it does not necessarily and uniformly exclude sin; yet by sin it is so painfully wounded, that it cannot rest at ease, but utters earnest and bitter cries for pardoning mercy and healing grace. True it is indeed that the Christian is already pardoned, as it is written, " God for Christ's sake hath forgiven him," " forgiven him all trespasses." (Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13.) And not only so, but God will not impute sin to him, and " he shall not come into condemnation." (St. John v. 24.) But though it is written, and may therefore be fully relied on, that the Christian shall not come into condemnation with God, it is nowhere written that he shall not contract guilt, and fall into self-condemnation. On

the contrary, " if he say he has no sin, he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him;" but in the light of truth he knows he has sin, and when he confesses his sin, " God is faithful and just to forgive him his sin." Thus, forgiveness, as it respects the mind of God, who sees the end from the beginning and changeth not, is perfect. There is, and can be, no condemnation in this sense; God will not so impute sin. But as it respects the susceptible and penitent experience of the Christian, forgiveness is not perfect. In the course of every hour he contracts some stain of sin, and therefore at the end of every hour he requires some washing of mercy in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. For this he prays in humble confession and earnest supplication, encouraged by the revealed mind of his heavenly Father towards him. Has there a day passed without any special sin which he can particularise in his confession? The cause may be his want of watchfulness to detect, or his want of spiritual sensitiveness to feel; and fully alive to this, he can then exclaim in all sincerity, Lord, " who can tell how oft he offendeth? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." (Ps. xix.) Such prayers are welcomed in heaven. The pardoning mercy of the Lord endureth for ever.

This truth is beautifully illustrated by the occurrence recorded in the thirteenth chapter of St. John. Our Lord's washing of the disciples' feet was emblematical of this continuous forgiveness. Peter did not understand it so, and looking no further than

the outward act, and what seemed to him the needless condescension of Jesus in it, he objected, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." The Lord's reply, "if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," showed him how deeply important it was; and then, in his excited feelings, he went wrong on the other side, exclaiming, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." The answer of Jesus is full of explanation and consolation. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." He that is justified needeth not to be justified again as at the first, but only to be kept clean by a continuous washing from daily contracted defilement. The beloved disciple applied this afterwards in writing to the church. After a glorious statement of sanctifying truth, he says, "My little children, these things,"—the things he had just stated concerning Jesus Christ—"write I unto you,"—with this intent—"that ye sin not." And then he adds, "And if any man"—among you—"sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John i.; and iii. 1, 2.)

But although there be thus an open door for the Christian to return to his pardoning Father, a door which no man can shut, yet is the re-entrance at it preceded by much bitterness. Sins of unfaithfulness raise clouds of darkness, and storms of terror. These agitate the soul to its centre, and force from it cries of agony, because of unbelief. "Will the Lord cast

off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?" (Ps. lxxvii. 7—9.) Then it is that the Christian learns, not in an intellectual theory, but in the experience of a broken and contrite heart, what an evil thing and bitter it is, to depart from the living God. Then it is that he realizes what the attention of "the wise" is called to by the Psalmist—"the darkness, the shadow of death, the binding in affliction and iron, the abhorring of all manner of meat, the drawing near unto the gates of death, the melting of the souls because of trouble, the reeling to and fro and staggering like a drunken man." (Psalm cvii.)

But what then? Members of Christ have indeed incurred spiritual desertion and fatherly discipline, leading to cries of agony almost amounting to despair; but nothing has occurred to interfere in the smallest degree with the covenanted security of the church of God.

Just the reverse. They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivers them out of their distresses: he breaks the gates of brass, and cuts the bars of iron asunder: he sends his word and heals them; he maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet: so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Whoso is *wise*, and

will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." (Ps. cvii.)

Having thus cleared some things out of our way, which, if not noticed, might have presented themselves as objections to this great and precious truth, we proceed to say—

What the security of the church does mean.

It does mean that the genuine members of the church of God, objects of his distinguishing love, being each, at his appointed time, quickened by the Holy Ghost, adopted and renewed, united to Christ and made partakers of the divine nature; shall never fall from the relationship to God into which they are thus taken, shall never lose the vital principle of his upholding and sanctifying grace, shall never be entirely forsaken by his Holy Spirit, shall never sink into a state of corruption and condemnation; but shall be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. i. 5.)

Most express was the assurance which Jesus gave of this security when Simon Peter confessed him as the true Messiah, the Son of the living God. This truth is the great foundation. God manifest in the flesh. This is the Rock which verily was foreordained, and concerning which Jehovah had said by the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." (Isaiah xxviii. 16.) This truth can be attained to

by no human sagacity. When Peter avowed it, Jesus perceived that God had taught it to him, and said, " Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (St. Matt. xvi. 17, 18.)

This truth so revealed to thee, and confessed by thee, is the rock indeed. And I say also unto thee, that thou art a stone, (πετρος,) a lively stone, built upon this rock, (πετρα): and upon this rock will I build, not thee only, but also my whole church; and the gates of hell, the combined powers and malicious counsel and skill of all the fallen angels, shall not prevail against it; no, not against a single stone of it, for it shall be perfect for ever.

To this figure St. Peter refers in his preaching and in his writing. In his preaching, when called before the Jewish council, to answer concerning the impotent man, by what means he was made whole: he said, " Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole. *This is the stone* which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other." (Acts iv. 10—12.) In his writing, also, he says to the members of the church, concerning their Head

and Lord, "To whom coming as unto a *living stone*, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. ii. 3—6.)

St. Paul adopts the same figure, when speaking of himself and his fellow-labourer in the gospel, he calls them builders, and to the members of the church he says, "Ye are God's building," but concerning the foundation he says, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 9—11.)

In adopting and defending the interpretation here given of our Lord's celebrated address to Simon Peter, I have no wish to lose sight of the fact—or to conceal it from any of my readers—that other interpretations can plead highly respectable authority. In Dr. Barrow's Treatise on the assumed "Supremacy of the Pope," the matter is fully and candidly stated. My readers will be edified by the following extract.

"The last argument which I shall use against this primacy, shall be the insufficiency of those arguments and testimonies, which they allege to warrant and prove it.

"If this point be of so great consequence as they make it; if, as they would persuade us, the subsistence, order, unity, and peace of the church, together with the salvation of Christians, do depend on it;* if, as they suppose, many great points of truth

* Bellarmine, præf. ad lib. de Pontiff. R.

do hang on this pin; if it be, as they declare, a main article of faith, and 'not only a simple error, but a pernicious heresy, to deny this primacy:' * then it is requisite that a clear revelation from God should be producible in favour of it, (for on that ground only *such* points can firmly stand;) then it is most probable that God (to prevent controversies, occasions of doubt, and excuses of error about so grand a matter) would not have failed to have declared it so plainly, as might serve to satisfy any reasonable man, and to convince any forward gainsayer: but no such revelation doth appear: for the places of Scripture which they allege do not plainly express it, nor pregnantly imply it, nor can it by fair consequence be inferred from them: no man unprepossessed with affection to their side, would descry it in them; without thwarting St. Peter's order and wresting the Scriptures, they cannot deduce it from them. This, by examining their allegations, will appear.

"They allege those words of our Saviour uttered by him on occasion of St. Peter's confessing him to be the Son of God: 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church.' Here, say they, St. Peter is declared the foundation, that is, the sole governor of the church.†

"To this I answer:

"1. Those words do not clearly signify anything to their purpose; for they are metaphorical, and

* Bell. de Pont. R. i. 10.

† P. Gelas. i. Dis. 21, cap. 3.

thence ambiguous, or capable of divers interpretations; whence they cannot suffice to ground so main a point of doctrine, or to warrant so huge a pretence; these ought to stand on downright, evident, and indubitable testimony.

"It is pretty to observe how Bellarmine proposeth this testimony: 'Of which words,' saith he, 'the sense is plain and obvious, that it be understood, that under two metaphors the principate of the whole church was promised;'* as if that sense could be so plain and obvious, which is couched under two metaphors, and those not very pat or clear in application to their sense.

"2. This is manifestly confirmed from that the fathers and divines, both ancient and modern, have much differed in exposition of these words.

"'Some,' saith Abulensis,† 'say that this rock is Peter—others say, and better, that it is Christ—others say, and yet better, that it is the confession which Peter maketh.'

"For some interpret this rock to be Christ himself, of whom St. Paul saith, 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

"St. Austin telleth us in his Retractations, that he often had expounded the words to this purpose, although he did not absolutely reject that interpretation which made St. Peter the rock; leaving it to the reader's choice which is the most probable.‡

* Bell. de Pont. i. 10. † Tostat. in Matt. xvi. qu. 67.
‡ Aug. Retr. i. 21.

"Others (and those most eminent fathers) do take the rock to be St. Peter's faith or profession. 'On the rock,' saith the prince of interpreters, 'that is on the faith of his profession:'* and again, 'Christ said that he would build his church on Peter's confession:'† and again, (he or another ancient writer under his name,) 'On this rock, he said, not on Peter; for he did not build his church on the man, but on his faith.'‡

"'Our Lord,' saith Theodoret, 'did permit the first of the Apostles, whose confession he did fix as a prop or foundation of the church, to be shaken.'§

"Whence, Origen saith that every 'disciple of Christ is the rock,'‖ in virtue of his agreement with Peter in that holy confession.

"This sense even popes have embraced.¶

"Others say, that as St. Peter did not speak for himself, but in the name of all the Apostles,** and of all faithful people representing the pastors and people of the church; so correspondently our Lord did declare that he would build his church on such faithful pastors and confessors.

"Others do indeed by the rock understand St. Peter's person, but do not thereby expound to be meant his being supreme governor of the Apostles, or of the whole church.††

* Chrys. in Matt. xvi. 18. † Chrys. in John i. 50.

‡ Ibid. tom. v. Or. 163. Hil. de Trin. 6. § Theod. Ep. 77.

‖ Orig. in Matt. xvi. p. 275.

¶ Greg. M. Ep. iii. 33. Felix iii. Ep. 5.

** Cypr. Ep. 55. Aug. Ep. 165. Hier. in loc.

†† Vide Rigalt. in Cypr. Ep. 27, 40, 70, 71, 73.

"The divines, schoolmen, and canonists of the Roman communion, do not also agree in exposition of the words; and divers of the most learned among them do approve the interpretation of St. Chrysostom.

"Now then, how can so great a point of doctrine be firmly grounded on a place of so doubtful interpretation? How can any one be obliged to understand the words according to their interpretation, which persons of so good sense and so great authority do understand otherwise? With what modesty can they pretend that meaning to be clear, which so perspicacious eyes could not discern therein? Why may not I excusably agree with St. Chrysostom or St. Augustin in understanding the place? May I not reasonably oppose their judgment to the opinion of any modern doctors, deeming Bellarmine as fallible in his conceptions as one of them? Why consequently may I not without blame refuse their doctrine, as built on this place, or disavow the goodness of their proof?

"3. It is very evident that the Apostles themselves did not understand those words of our Lord to signify any grant or promise to St. Peter of supremacy over them; for would they have contended for the chief place, if they had understood whose it of right was by our Lord's own positive determination? would they have disputed about a question which to their knowledge by their master was already stated? Would they have troubled our Lord to inquire of

him who should be the greatest in his kingdom, when they knew that our Lord had declared his will to make St. Peter viceroy? Would the sons of Zebedee have been so foolish and presumptuous as to beg the place, which they knew by our Lord's word and promise fixed on St. Peter? Would St. Peter, among the rest, have fretted at that idle overture, whereas he knew the place by our Lord's immutable purpose and infallible declaration assured to him? And if none of the Apostles did understand the words to imply this Roman sense, who can be obliged so to understand them? Yea, who can wisely, who can safely so understand them? for surely they had common sense, as well as any man living now; they had as much advantage as we can have to know our Lord's meaning; their ignorance therefore of this sense being so apparent, is not only a just excuse for not admitting this interpretation, but a strong bar against it.

"4. This interpretation also doth not well consist with our Lord's answers to the contests, inquiries, and petitions of his disciples, concerning the point of superiority; for doth he not (if the Roman expositions be good) seem on those occasions, not only to dissemble his own word and promise, but to disavow them, or thwart them? Can we conceive that he would in such a case of doubt forbear to resolve them, clearly to instruct them, and admonish them of their duty?"*

* *Barrow*, Sup. of the Pope, Suppo. i.

To this I add another extract of a more popular and not less convincing character. "Although I am not fond of mere verbal criticisms, or disposed to build much upon them, they are sometimes necessary. This is particularly the case where much of the strength of our opponent's cause is rested on the meaning of a word or phrase. The surname Peter, signifies, in the Greek language, a stone; and hence, when our Lord says, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,' Roman Catholics would fondly persuade themselves that he meant the person of Peter in both cases; as if he had said, thou art *rock*, and upon thee, this rock, I will build my church: but unfortunately for their cause, the word in the original expressing the foundation of the church, is *not the same* as the Apostle's surname. The words are 'I say also unto thee that thou art, πετρος, *Petros*, and upon this πετρα, *Petra*, I will build my church.' Roman Catholics indeed, assert that these two words have exactly the same meaning, but for this assertion they have no proof. The word *Petros* occurs nowhere in the New Testament except as the Apostle's name, so that we cannot ascertain its exact import from the Scriptures. In Homer,* it signifies a stone, or fragment of rock. It is used in the same sense by Pindar; but in no instance, in Greek, does it signify an extended or

* In confirmation of this remark, Dr. Stewart refers without citation to "Iliad, Book vii. v. 270; and Book xvi. v. 411." For the classical reader I now add,

fixed rock. The word *Petra* often occurs in the New Testament, and is indeed always the word in the original, where in our translation we find rock.*

ὁλοοιτροχος ὡς ἀπο πετρης,
Ὁντε κατὰ στεφάνης ποταμος χειμαῤῥοος ωσῃ,
ρηξας ασπετῳ ομβρῳ αναιδεος εχματα πετρης,
νψι τ' αναθρωσκων πετεται, κτυπει δε θ'υπ' αυτου
ὑλη· ὁ δ'ασφαλεως θεει εμπεδον ὁφρ' αυ ἵκηται
ισοπεδον τοτε δ'ουτι κυλινδεται, εσσυμενος περ.

Iliad xiii. 137.

Heyne, in his note on this passage, understands πετρος as the substantive for ὁλοοιτροχος, all the remaining adjectives, participles, or relatives are in the masculine gender, whereas πετρης is the genitive fem. Thus it is the fragment from the great rock to which Hector is compared.

Damm also, (and these both may be regarded as final authorities about Homeric Greek,) in his lexicon translates or paraphrases the clause thus, "sicut grandis rotundus lapis a petrâ decurrens," ubi πετρα, est, το ορος πετρωδες, εξ οὑ ὁ ολοοιτροχος ομβρω πολλω απορραγεις, ιεται κατα γης; and this use of πετρα in Homer he supports by many references, viz. Book 2, 88 : 4, 107 : 9, 15 : 15, 4 : and πετρος, the smaller stone, as for εκ βαλων μυλοειδεῖ πετρω, εσσυμενον βαλεπετρω.

On the passage in Matt xvi., Bishop Burgess (in his letter to the clergy of the diocese of St. David, p. 13 of his volume of tracts) writes thus : "He was not Petra but Petrus ; and Petrus when distinguished from Petra, certainly means not a *rock* but a *stone ;*" and this opimon he fortifies ably both by argument and authorities. I find also, on the first page of the advertisement to this letter, the following quotation.

"Petra enim Christus multis modis et figuris prædicatus est."—*Tertullian* adv. Judæos, p. 100.

"Non dictum est Petro, Tu es Petra, sed Tu es Petrus ; Petra autem erat Christus, quem confessus Simon dictus est Petrus."—*Augustin* Retract. lib. 1. ch. 21.

* St. Matt. vii. 24 ; xxvii. 51—60 ; Rom. ix. 33.

You see then, that the word 'petra' upon which our Lord said he would build his church, signifies an extensive, immoveable, or fixed mass of rock; whilst the word 'petros,' the surname of the Apostle when applied to inanimate objects, signifies only a fragment of rock, or what is commonly called a stone. Now, had it been our Lord's intention to announce to Peter his supremacy by informing him that the church should be built upon his person; why should he have used a different word to express the church's foundation, from what he had before assigned to the Apostle as a surname? Why should it not have been Petros in both cases? This reasoning derives not a little additional force from the circumstance that God is so frequently termed a Rock in scripture, especially by the prophets, and in the book of Psalms. It is, indeed, the common image by which the servants of the Lord express their conviction of Jehovah's stability and faithfulness. Our Lord Jesus Christ also is denominated a Rock in the New Testament, (1 Cor. x. 4,) and the original word there is the same, πετρα, petra; but in no instance do we find this word applied to a mere man."

* * * * * *

"Jesus is styled a Rock, in a figurative and relative sense. He is like a rock for stability, durability and safety to those who know and feel their need of him. Messiah is essentially the 'Rock of ages;' but as mediator, he is a rock only when rested upon

by sinful man. As many parts of the earth's surface are suitable for building, but are termed foundations only when some structure is commenced or erected on them; so, Christ, although at all times a foundation of salvation in God's purposes of mercy, becomes actually such, only when he is known and confessed as he was by the Apostles. 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.' (1 John v. 1.) The Apostles' confession was both sincere and spiritual. From their first acquaintance with their master, they appeared to have entertained no doubt that 'Jesus was the Christ;' and this knowledge they received, not from flesh and blood, from human calculation, but from the Spirit of God. Their knowledge of their master was far from being perfect; for Peter was ignorant of that most important fact, that it was expedient that Christ should suffer. (St. Matt. xvi. 22.) But their knowledge was correct as far as it extended. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, although of the extent of the Messiah's character and offices, they had not at that time adequate ideas."

* * * * * * "It may be further asked, why did our Lord use the words, 'I say also unto thee that thou are Peter?' Why did he at all mention the Apostle's surname, if he had no allusion to its signification? This question is answered by the Apostle himself, in his first general epistle, (ii. 5,) where he states that believers are 'lively stones' built upon the Lord as a 'living stone,' so that they

become 'a spiritual house.' Our Lord made therefore, a most appropriate and graceful allusion to the signification of the name Peter; and it was entirely owing to that signification, that the promise of power and authority which was intended for all the Apostles, and afterwards actually fulfilled to them all, was made in the singular number, as though it were confined to Peter alone. The Apostles had all, through Peter, declared that Jesus had been revealed to them as the Christ, the foundation stone; and as Simon's surname signified a stone, one of the usual materials of which buildings are constructed, the Redeemer confined his reply, on this occasion,* to him." * * * * *

* * "Were additional evidence wanted to shew that the confession which Peter made, and not Peter himself, was the rock upon which the church is to be built, it is supplied by the concluding verse of this paragraph: 'then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man, that he was Jesus the Christ.'

"Had Jesus invested Peter with supremacy, in the preceding part of the conversation; it would have been natural to him to have concluded it with a charge to the disciples not to tell that he had appointed a chief officer to preside in his approaching kingdom; or he might with great propriety have

* Much of what was said on this occasion in the singular number, as to Peter alone, was said on another occasion (St. Matt. xviii. 18) in the plural number to them all.

concluded the conversation with a charge to the other disciples to submit themselves dutifully to Peter, or with a recommendation to that Apostle to cultivate a spirit of moderation in the expectation and afterwards in the enjoyment of his new dignity. Such a termination of the conversation would have been not only natural, but on many accounts necessary, had our Lord bestowed upon Peter the alleged supremacy. He gives no such charge: but to shew that the discovery and confession of his character and office were the most important part of the conversation, he charged them to tell no man as yet, what only they were apprized of, viz. "that he was Jesus, the Christ."*

Reverting then to our Lord's words, and excusably agreeing in the interpretation of them with Chrysostom, Augustine, and Barrow, I hail in them the indefeasible security of the church of God. "Faithful is he who promised, who also will do it." The promise so made to the church, includes every member of it: and the terms of the promise, in their emphatic completeness, would fail, if, through the malice or ingenuity of the devil, any individual chosen of God the Father and given to the Son to be builded on the rock, should be omitted; or if any, when once builded thereon, should be broken off again, and cast away.

This promise is sometimes applied to the *conti-*

* *Papal Supremacy examined*—A Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Stewart.

nuance of a body professing Christianity on the earth throughout all ages: and so taken it is understood to secure, against all opposition and persecution, an uninterrupted succession of christian people, to the end of the world. This is what Roman Catholic writers call the *indefectibility* of the church.

This, to say no more of it, is a low worldly view of the subject, confining our Lord's promise to this present life: because if the interests of eternity be included, the promise can apply only to the real and true believers in each successive generation; seeing that over all the others the devil does prevail, and prevail for ever, as they successively die.

It appears to me to be wretchedly unworthy of our Lord's gracious promise, to apply it to the mere preservation upon earth, of a corporate body, millions of whose members may never be in heaven.* That

* "Our Lord's promise to his church, that the gates of hell should never prevail against it, may be understood either individually or collectively. In the one sense, it promises personal protection and final salvation to every faithful member; and in the other, perpetuity of privilege and protection to the whole church. As the word *Hades*, in this promise translated hell, literally signifies the grave, or state of the dead; the promise may be victory over death, or resurrection and immortality to each member of the church. Or, if we suppose it to mean here the infernal regions, as the gates are a common expression for counsel and power; the promise will amount to an assurance, individually and collectively, that the church shall be protected from temptation and final perdition.

Although these distinctions are commonly made by divines, they are in my mind unnecessary. As the church collective is

such a body exists, and will continue to exist as a visible corporation, or combination of corporations till the second coming of Christ, is not denied: but it includes both good and bad, holy and unholy, and it must not be identified with the church of God which is holy. It includes adulterous idolaters as well as chaste worshippers in spirit and in truth, and it must not be identified with the Bride the Lamb's wife. It includes wood, hay, stubble, and must not be identified with the Lord's jewels.

The bride, considered as such, is veiled. The jewels, as such, are hidden; until that day when the Lord shall make them up, as his completed treasure. Then, in that day which will burn like an oven, there shall be effectual separation and consequent clear discernment between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not,* between him to whom the promise is made that the gates of hell shall not prevail against him, and him who shall be found, after all, a child of the devil.

composed of individuals, and death and hell are represented as united both in their opposition to man's happiness, and in the Messiah's victory over them; I think the amount of the promise is, that every descendant of Adam who "obtains like precious faith" with Peter and the other Apostles, shall be protected, supported and sanctified in time, and raised up and glorified in eternity: and that of such individuals, to a greater or less amount, the Lord will have a church, in every age, even to the end of the world."—*Dr. Stewart.*

* Mal. iii. 17, 18, and iv. 1.

ii. This leads to a consideration of the *visibility* of the church of God in Christ.

During this life, although the members of the church of God while on earth are as visible as other men; yet not *as* members of that church. They are clearly visible *as men* to all around them, but to all around them, they are doubtful *as Christians.* A real Christian may indeed, and ought to, have assurance of his own relation to his Lord; may, in that sense, be visible to himself: and several such, living together may have good hope amounting to confidence concerning one another: and so the true church, in certain localities, and at certain seasons, may approximate in glimpses to visibility. But, taken as a whole, the language of Hooker is clearly and beautifully descriptive of it.

"That church of Christ, which we properly term his body mystical, can be but one: neither can that one be sensibly discerned of any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth—albeit their natural persons be visible—we do not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds by intellectual conceit (fancy) are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is; a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because *the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense.* Whatsoever we read in scripture concerning the endless love and the saving mercy which

God sheweth towards his church, the only proper subject of it is *this* church. Concerning this flock it is, that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not objects unto our sense; only unto God who seeth their hearts, and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto him they are clear and manifest. All men knew Nathanael to be an Israelite; but our Saviour, piercing deeper, giveth further testimony of him than man could have done with such certainty as he did, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!"*

Thus the matter stands, "The Lord"—and the Lord alone—"knoweth them that are his." And thus it must continue, till the Lord shall "accomplish the number of his elect and hasten his kingdom."† Then shall be presented to a wondering creation, the TRUE CHURCH VISIBLE, or what the Apostle calls, "*the* MANIFESTATION *of the sons of God.*"‡ The sons of God, though a real body, are not till then a manifest body. They have indeed already the spirit of adoption whereby they cry Abba, Father; but they are "*waiting* for the adoption," as the Apostle dclares in the same context, not clearly the inward spirit of adoption which they

* Eccl. Pol. book iii. sec. 1. † Burial Service.

‡ Rom. viii. 19.

already enjoy, but outward visible adoption, to wit, "the redemption of *the body*."* The Head of the church himself was "*declared* to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead:"† and the declaration or manifestation, or visibility of his body the true church, waits and must wait for the resurrection of the body.

Vain are all the attempts made to prove that the true church of God is a visible, that is, a distinguishable body from all others, during the present dispensation. Our Lord's parables reprove such attempts, inasmuch as in the various illustrations of the gospel kingdom, they describe a continued mixture of good and bad until his coming again, and an awful separation at his coming. The mixture is so subtle, that no true and certain separation can now be effected. The separation shall be so complete, that no mixture, however subtle, can then be continued.

To this agree the apostolical epistles. They address the members of the true church of God, warning them of the dangers by which they are surrounded, dangers from "false brethren" among others. They describe "*a form of godliness*," without the reality or power of it, as characteristic of this dispensation in its last days. They describe the ungodly multitudes—not heathen, but professors of a form of godliness—as living in careless ease, and saying to themselves and to one another, "Peace and safety," till the Lord himself shall de-

* Rom. viii. 23, comp. v. 15. † Rom. i. 3, 4.

scend from heaven, and sudden destruction shall fall upon them. They represent the true servants of Christ as enduring persecutions and tribulations, and encourage them in the exercise of patience till the coming of the Lord. *Then* hidden things shall be made manifest; visible vengeance on the one side, and visible glory on the other: "seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble his real saints; and to those who are troubled, rest: when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." *

Unable to find in the New Testament even the appearance of proof for the alleged visibility of the church during the present dispensation, the advocates of that opinion have recourse to the Old Testament; and prophecies concerning the restored Jewish nation have been dislocated by them from their contexts, and applied without proof, or even argument, to the christian church.

The most notable example of this occurs in the case of a passage from Isaiah, which is cited in every Romish catechism, as a scriptural proof of the visi-

* 2 Thess. i. 6—10.

bility of the church. The words are these: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah ii. 2, 3.)

It is taken for granted that the "last days" here predicted, signify the christian dispensation from its commencement, and that the "mountain of the Lord's house" signifies the christian church. Whereupon it is triumphantly exclaimed, What more visible than a mountain? and how absurd it is to talk of that church as an invisible church, which the prophet predicts under the emblem of a mountain! I am not aware, however, that any respectable writer has ever exposed himself to the charge of this absurdity.

The general interpretation of the prophecy here given, is indeed loosely adopted by many christian writers. I venture to say loosely, because those writers have felt themselves compelled by the context to modify, so as in truth to contradict, their own statements. Thus Mr. Scott, in his Commentary, after applying the second and third verses of the prophecy to the establishment of the Gospel and the calling of the

Gentiles, when he advances to the fourth verse, makes this most just observation upon the whole: "There needs no other proof that the grand accomplishment of this prophecy is reserved for some future period, than the consideration, that nothing, *in any measure answerable* to such forcible expressions, has yet occurred on earth."

Then, after quoting with approbation similar sentiments from Bishop Lowth, he adds, "Whether the restoration of Israel to their own land, and of Jerusalem to its pristine glory, of being the capital city of the religious world, be intended, events will show; but certainly something far beyond the crushing of the opposing powers is meant by men's "learning war no more."

It is of no small importance that this matter should be examined carefully; for the consequences involved in the interpretation of this and similar prophecies, are serious in the extreme.

By the interpretation usually given, a visibility is ascribed to the christian church, and this is all which many who adopt it intend to admit; but it is quite impossible consistently to stop short at this, because the language of the prophecy, so understood, predicts not only a visibility of the church, but a preeminence of one church, or of the church in one place, over all the rest. There is not only a mountain, but that mountain is established in *the top of the mountains*, and *exalted above the hills*. If the mountain signify the christian church, then many

christian churches are predicted, some as inferior mountains, some as hills, while one is presented to view in high headship over all the rest. This is, of course, eagerly seized by the controversialists of Rome, who say that *their* church is intended—the mother and mistress of all churches.

Protestant interpreters are not prepared to yield this, but having yielded the first step, they find themselves involved in difficulty or inconsistency; not indeed by the facts or truth of the case, but by their own rash and—as I cannot but feel—unscriptural admissions. Certainly there is no approach towards any visible fulfilment of this prophecy, thus interpreted, in this dispensation; there is not even any claim advanced, except by the usurpation of Rome; and if it can indeed be *proved* that the prophecy belongs to the present dispensation, it cannot, I think, be denied that it supplies a strong confirmation of Rome's claim to be the head of all the churches. If, on the contrary, it can be proved that the prophecy refers to a different period and a different subject altogether, then not only Rome's claim to pre-eminence, but also Rome's argument for the visibility now of the true church of God—so far as they rest on this portion of Holy Scripture—must be relinquished.

The fourth verse of this prophecy is, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

It cannot be pretended that this is characteristic of the christian dispensation. Well and truly has Mr. Scott written, that "nothing in any measure answerable to these forcible expressions has yet occurred on earth." Yet to give the passage some appearance of application he writes thus: "By the establishment of the Gospel, the Lord becomes judge among the nations who willingly submit to his authority, and make him the arbiter of their differences: and by his rebukes and convictions, the instructions that he gives, and the grace which he bestows, he promotes peace as well as purity. If all men were consistent Christians, there could be no war," &c.

Doubtless it is the tendency of the Gospel to promote peace, and all true Christians *ought* to live peaceably, but to apply to this the language of the prophet, is to confound prediction with precept. It is to represent the sure prophecies of the God of truth as nothing more than descriptions of duty, frustrable by disobedient men: that is, as no prophecies at all.

But the application now before us is open to a still more special refutation. It represents Isaiah as using these words among others, while describing, in the Spirit, the christian dispensation, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" but our Lord Jesus

Christ, standing at the opening of the christian dispensation, and prophesying of its progress, said, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," and "when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified, for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by-and-by."*

There can be no mistake in the application of our Lord's prophecy to the christian dispensation; but to apply the prophecy of Isaiah to the same period, is to set the prophet and the Saviour in direct verbal contradiction to each other; it follows, therefore, that the language of the prophet now under consideration, cannot with truth be applied to the same period.

To what then is it to be applied, and when?

I answer, to the Jewish nation restored from their present dispersion, and all the other nations of the earth then at peace, perfect peace and harmony, under Jewish dominion.

And where is the proof of this?†

* St. Mark xxiv. 7; St. Luke xxi. 9.

† A very few years have elapsed since it was a serious risk to any man's reputation, I will not say for sound judgment and cautious discretion, in the interpretation of Scripture; but even for common sense and ordinary prudence, to avow his expectation of the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of their fathers, and their subsequent national glory under their great king, the son of David. In vain the "sure word of prophecy" was cited; in vain the literal interpretation was defended; in vain the facts which have already fulfilled some prophecies

I appeal, in the first place, to the inspired heading of the prophecy itself, as written in the first verse of the chapter. "The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw, *concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*"

were appealed to, in proof that in those instances the literal interpretation was imperative; in vain it was shewn that if the literal interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy be rejected, the evidence hitherto derived from fulfilled prophecy must be relinquished. In this field of scriptural argumentation and "evil report," the author of these pages, with a few brethren who were deemed equally visionary, was content patiently to labour. Some of his fellow-labourers have fallen asleep; but he has been permitted to see the fruit of his labours, and with thankful joy to find interpretations and arguments which he preached and printed in London twenty years ago, now transcribed into the pages of the most discreet, as well as the most devoted and distinguished, of the presbyters and prelates of the English church.

The following are specimens.

"There is a concurrent testimony resulting from the prophetic writings, that Israel shall be restored to favour, shall be gathered from their dispersion, shall be collected into their own land, shall again be employed as the instrument of God's mercy, shall again be the means of renewing the face of the earth, and of influencing the destiny of man; and as I must be conscious that the gracious purpose of God towards man is not yet accomplished, as darkness still covers the earth and gross darkness the people, I must believe—for the evidence seems too clear to be resisted—that the purpose of God is to resume its former channel, when it resumes its onward progress, and hastens the completion of its work; that Israel is to be employed, even as Israel has been employed; that the Lord will arise, and have mercy upon Zion, "when the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come;" (Ps. cii. 13): that the Lord shall arise upon Israel, and his glory shall be seen upon them; and the Gentiles shall come to their

This designates, with sufficient plainness, the subject of the prophecy; and to cut off all pretence of ambiguity in this mention of the Jewish nation, I refer, in the second place, to the parallel prophecy in Micah.

light, and kings to the brightness of their rising. (Isaiah lx. 2, 3.) In justification of these assumptions, and to avoid the wearisomeness of verbal criticism and multiplied references in making good the interpretation I contend for, let me ask you to bear in mind the present state of Christendom, and to consider the little progress which the Gospel has made in the world since the day when the Jews ceased to be its preachers. Let me next ask you to consider whether there does not appear to be a cause for introducing some fresh instrumentality, a necessity for some new agency towards the accomplishment of that which we believe to be the will and the purpose of Jehovah. And, finally, let me ask you to consider, whether we are not warranted by past experience in expecting that they may be the most successful preachers of the Gospel, whom we know to have been the chosen instruments for making known the will of God in former ages."—*Sermon before the Jews' Society*, 1842. By the Rev. Henry Raikes, M. A., Chancellor of the Diocese of Chester.

" It has been too customary with Christians to look upon the Jews as a people, who, having performed the part allotted to them in God's moral government of the world, have been laid aside, as an instrument which has done its work, and will be no more required by the artificer. The story of their fortunes has been regarded as belonging altogether to the annals of the past. Their continued existence, indeed, has been pointed out, as a verification of the Word of God; but their future bearing upon the church of Christ, and upon the spiritual state of mankind, was too long overlooked. Of later years it has been more clearly seen, that the thread of their destiny is interwoven with the history of the world, from the moment when it first fell under

After a strong reproof of the Jewish people, their princes, their judges, their priests, and their prophets, for their divers iniquities, he says, " Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field,

captivity to sin to the time when it shall be finally delivered from its thraldom; that there are prophecies still unfulfilled, the accomplishment of which is certain, foreshowing that the Jews have still an important part to act in the development of the christian dispensation; and that they are to be principal agents in its closing, as they were in its opening scenes. * * * And that, which is here (Deut. xxx.) spoken of as a possible contingency, is distinctly foretold by later prophets, as an event which will assuredly come to pass. The eighth and the three last chapters of Zechariah cannot, we think, without doing violence to all the laws of interpretation, be so explained, as not to imply a future restoration of the Jews to their ancient and covenanted inheritance, and the re-establishment of their national polity. This is, of necessity, connected with a re-instalment of the holy city of Jerusalem, in splendour and strength. *Jerusalem,* says the prophet, *shall be safely inhabited. It shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place; and men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction.*

" It is scarcely possible to understand these words in a purely spiritual sense of the heavenly Jerusalem; and if there were no other ground of objection to such an interpretation, it would be precluded by the prophetical declaration of our blessed Lord. *They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*; from which words it is a necessary inference that when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down, and shall be restored to her ancient state. As the *city* of Jerusalem was trodden down, so the *city* of Jeru-

and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and *the mountain of the house* as the high places of the forest. But in the last days, it shall come to pass that *the mountain of the house* of the Lord shall be established in

salem shall be built up."—*Sermon before the Jews' Society*, 1843. By the Lord Bishop of London.

"I can but instance one further particular, proclaimed by the unanimous voice of prophecy in connexion with the conversion of the Jews, and as either contemporaneous with, or immediately preceding, or immediately subsequent to that event; their restoration to the land of their fathers. From Deuteronomy to the Apocalypse, this promise is reiterated again and again, with a redundance of testimony which can scarcely be paralleled, in reference to any other object of prophetical declaration. The only question, if question there be, is whether Jerusalem, in its renewed glory, the holy city, and the holy mount, their own land, the land of Jacob and of their fathers, are to be understood of the literal or spiritual Jerusalem, of the literal or spiritual Zion, of the literal or spiritual Israel, of the land of type and metaphor, or the actual and geographical territory. Shall we try the question by the ordinary rules of constructive criticism? They seem to lead of necessity to the *literal* interpretation. Or by the comparison of texts confessedly literal, with texts confessedly figurative? The result is the same. Or by the analogy of prophecies accomplished, with prophecies yet to receive their completion; of events past with events future? The answer is not different. Or by the difficulties of admitting the other hypothesis? Still we can arrive at no other conclusion. Or by the concurrent opinion of the safest and soundest expositors? The adoption of one and the same solution of this mighty problem is still forced upon our minds, and under the weight of irresistible convictions we yield an assent which we cannot withhold, 'Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief.'"—*Sermon*

the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation

before the Jews' Society, 1844, by the Lord Bishop of Winchester.

"And yet, my brethren, an interest in the Jewish nation is an interest in the Gentile also. Surely unbelief must be banished from the earth, if the world were allowed to see the fulfilment of our hopes, and the completion of prophecies uttered in so remote an age; to see the Jewish people resettled in the land of their forefathers, 'worshipping David their king;' the real spiritual David. It is the anticipation which the Apostle himself indulges. 'For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?' When the apostles turned away from their unbelieving countrymen, and addressed themselves to the Gentiles, it was 'the reconciling of the world;' and to effect reconciliation, to bring nations which had been alienated from God, to love and serve him, is great and glorious. But to restore life is more glorious still; and when the Jew ceases to be unbelieving, and receives the Gospel, such an event will cause an awakening which can only be compared to the resurrection of the dead to new life and being.

"May God in his mercy bring about this blessed consummation! Remember the cause of his elect, and hasten his kingdom!"—*Sermon before the Jews' Society*, 1845, by the Lord Bishop of Chester.

shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." *

What now, I ask, is intended here by "the mountain of the house?" Zion shall be ploughed as a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps, and *the mountain of the house* as the high places of the forest."† Is it not the Jewish nation brought to desolation? "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that *the mountain of the house* shall be established in the top of the mountains." Does the mountain of the house mean something different here from what it meant in the preceding verse? Or is it not here also the Jewish nation, at a different period, and in a condition contrasted with her desolation in the interim? Let the sequel of the prophecy give answer, "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion

* Micah iii. 12, and iv. 1—4.

† On this verse Mr. Scott comments thus:—"To punish, therefore, their hypocrisy and iniquity, the city would certainly be desolated, and become heaps of rubbish; and the mountain on which the temple stood would be rendered as waste and unfrequented as the forests and deserts."

from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion," (in the top of the mountains and above all the hills,) " the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." *

To whom can these descriptions, with fairness and impartiality, be applied—" her that halteth," " her that is driven out," " her that was cast far off"? † Not surely to the christian church. When

* Micah iv. 8.

† This part of the prophecy is felt by Dr. Henderson as a difficulty in the way of the ordinary interpretation. He applies the first four verses to the christian church, but feeling that the expressions in the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses cannot be so applied, but must signify the restoration of the Jews, he has recourse to a supposed abrupt return of the prophet to the period of the deliverance of his people from their captivity in Babylon. In his heading of the chapter he thus describes the contents of verses 1—4.

" He (the prophet) predicts the establishment of the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins of idolatry; and the accession of the Gentiles, 1, 2; the peaceful nature of his reign, 3; and the security of his subjects, 4."

Then, in his note on verses 6—8, he says, " That the subject of these verses is the restoration from Babylon, and the re-establishment of the Jewish state, and not any spiritual gathering of men generally into the church of God, is placed beyond dispute by the prediction that the scattered and afflicted remnant of Israel was again to become a *strong nation*, verse 7, and by the use of the phrase הַמַּמְשָׁלָה הָרִאשֹׁנָה, *the former rule*, verse 8, which can only be interpreted of the theocratic government at Jerusalem."—Henderson, *on the Minor Prophets*, in loc.

was she driven out? When was she cast far off? Never. But these expressions accurately describe the state of the Jews during this dispensation; and to her who is so described, is the promise given from the mouth of the Lord of hosts, that she shall be a strong nation, and have the kingdom, even the first dominion. To this, which is the revealed will of God at the close of the christian dispensation, the prophecy does of right belong, and not to the christian church: therefore no argument can be fairly derived from it, in support of the alleged visibility of the church of God in Christ.

No. The visibility of the "man child," the mystical Christ, waits for his birth, and his birth for the last of his members. He cannot be born defective. The patriarchal believers composed only a part of his body, and must wait for the remainder. The Jewish believers composed another part, and must, in like manner, wait for the remainder. The primitive martyrs composed another part, and when they complain, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" they are told that they should "rest yet a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, shall be fulfilled." Christian believers, up to the present day, compose only another part of the same body; and, like their predecessors, must wait for the remainder. The travail goes on, and the child is not to be discerned as such,

till, *all* the members being ready, the perfect man shall stand up in "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." *

It was for this manifestation in one body, of *all* who shall believe in him, that Jesus prayed when he said, "Neither pray I for these (the Apostles) alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they *all*" (not a few of them in any one age or place, but all of them from the first and to the last inclusive: can anything less than this be the true and full meaning of our Lord's words, that *they all?*) "may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." †

This concluding clause, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," is urged against the interpretation of the prayer here given. It is alleged that this clause contains a prayer for the conversion of the world, to be brought about by means of manifested unity in the church; and that consequently the unity intended must be manifested in the present state of things while there remains a surrounding world to be influenced by it. So understood, it is a prayer that the world may in fact become the church—that there may be no unbelievers left.

To represent our Lord as having so prayed with reference to the present, or any past period of the world's history, is to represent him as having prayed

* Rom. viii. 18—23; Rev. vi. 9—11; Ephes. iv. 13.

† St. John xvii. 20, 21.

in vain. His prayer, so understood, has not been heard! This appears to me to be fatal to the interpretation so far; because "the Father heard him always." He prayed "according to the will of God," and he prayed "in faith;" and all such prayers are heard. If his intercession in this instance be in vain, what real reliance can be placed upon it, in any instance?

To say that this prayer had reference to a period of the world's history still future, and that in the sequel it will be fully answered; that the church in all its sections shall, in answer to this prayer, become so united and harmonious as thereby to lead to the conversion of the world; is to represent our Lord as having prayed for a result in this dispensation totally irreconcilable with his own and his Apostle's predictions of what the result shall be. The result predicted is *separation* at the second coming of Christ. Till then, evil, wide-spread and increasing evil, is to mark the course of the world, and keep the church in trouble. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, and the world stupefied in its worldliness will be boasting of its peace and safety, till sudden destruction shall come upon it, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

And further, to represent our Lord as praying in this clause for the conversion of the world, is to place this clause in direct opposition to a preceding clause in the same prayer; where he says,

* 2 Tim. iii. 13; 1 Thess. v. 1, 2.

" I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine."

Of course it will be asked, for what then did he pray? His words are, " That the world may believe *that thou hast sent me*." Let this be carefully observed. He does not pray that the world may *believe in him;* the phrase which he usually adopts to describe faith unto salvation; but that the world may believe that *the Father sent him*, which is a very different thing. The devils believe it now, and tremble. The world does not believe it now, and is careless. But the world shall believe it then—*then*, at the period referred to in the prayer, for Jesus never prayed in vain—*then*, when God shall judge the world by the man whom he had ordained and sent to redeem the world—and then it is, that the unwilling confession, so frequently anticipated in the prophetic Scriptures, as giving glory to God, shall be extorted from the world; they shall believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; they shall be compelled to recognise the righteousness of his retribution in judging the world; " Verily," they shall say, " verily, after all, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

It is my deliberate conviction that this prayer of our Lord, rightly understood, cannot be justly cited in support of the *visibility, as one*, of the christian church during the present dispensation. The visible unity here prayed for must be such as shall arrest

the observation of those who are not included in it; yet it must be such as shall include "*all* who shall believe" on Jesus Christ. Contemplating the successive generations of the church of God among men, we observe that of those "who shall believe" on Jesus Christ, and for whom he here prays, but a very small number have ever been at any one time upon the earth; and that even those few have been so separated, inevitably so, as not to have been conscious, save by vague report, of one another's existence. But the unity here prayed for must be such as shall include them *all*—such is the Saviour's expression—in conscious enjoyment. It is plainly impossible that this should be fulfilled in any one passing generation of the church, and still less in any small geographical section of a generation.

It is true that the individuals composing each successive generation, and each geographical section of a generation, are exhorted to unity; and it is true that, notwithstanding all their outward diversities, a unity has existed, and does now exist, among them; a unity which has been, and is, an object of faith, not of sight; a unity in the essential saving truth which *God teaches*, and which is the same always and everywhere. God teaches no falsehood, and concerning the members of the true church, it is written, "They shall be all taught of God." But in addition to this teaching, they are all taught of man also in many things. Hence the diversities among them; and these diversities affect, in a

greater or less degree, their views of what is taught them of God, and of the consequences which should practically result therefrom. This is inevitable, if men, variously constituted as they are, be left free agents. Genuine christian union, in the practice of mutual kindness and mutual forbearance, need not be interfered with by these diversities; but the general effect must be, to render it impossible to distinguish accurately between those who are indeed taught of God, and those who have only the appearance of being so. In other words, the real church of God in Christ, to which the promise is made that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, cannot, in any of its passing generations, be a visible company, separated by any palpable line of demarcation, from the rest of mankind.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST MILITANT HERE ON EARTH.—THEIR ORDINANCES.

An exclusively spiritual state of things: salvation without ordinances conceivable—But not the existing state of things—Visible ordinances instituted from the beginning—Man's compound creation—His religion suitable thereto—The tree of knowledge—The bleeding sacrifice—The rainbow—Circumcision—The Mosaic types—The person and ministry of Jesus—And now, ordinances rest on the same authority with spiritual truth.

THE blessings we have hitherto considered are purely spiritual, and as such, belong exclusively to the true members of Christ's mystical body. But now we approach a more complicated state of things. The blessings now to be considered, are not spiritual only, but material also. The material or visible part may be separated from the spiritual, and given to persons who have no participation whatever in the spiritual part. Hence, in reference to these matters, we have a mixed company to deal with, and

as the name which belongs of right to the spiritual is given also to the visible, we have now a "visible church."

"And because this visible church doth enfold the other (as one mass doth contain the good ore and base alloy; as one floor the corn and the chaff; as one field the wheat and the tares; as one net the choice fish and the refuse; as one fold the sheep and the goats; as one tree the living and the dry branches;) because this society is designed to be in appearance what the other is in reality, the same with the other; because therefore, presumptively every member of this doth pass for a member of the other, (the time of distinction and separation not yet being come,) because this in its profession of truth, in its sacrifices of devotion, in its practice of service and duty to God doth communicate with that, therefore commonly, the titles and attributes of the one are imparted to the other.

"'All,' saith St. Paul, 'are not Israel who are of Israel;' nor 'is he a Jew that is one outwardly;' yet in regard to the conjunction of the rest with the faithful Israelites, because of external consent in the same profession, and conspiring in the same services, all the congregation of Israel is styled 'a holy nation,' and 'peculiar people.'

"So likewise do the Apostles speak to all members of the church as to elect and holy persons, unto whom all the privileges of Christianity do belong; although really hypocrites and bad men 'do not

belong to the church,' nor are concerned in its unity, as St. Austin doth often teach."*—*Barrow.*

It is quite conceivable that the persons composing the true church of God might be renewed in the spirit of their mind, and so essentially united to Christ by the Holy Ghost working effectually in their hearts, and that after being so changed they might be preserved in a spiritual state of mind throughout the remainder of their lives, and then taken to heaven: and all this without any visible instrumentality employed, but entirely by the unseen ministry of angels, or by the immediate power of the omnipresent God.

Such a constitution of things is conceivable. It is not indeed the actual one which God has been pleased to institute; but for the sake of the contrast to follow, and the consequent clearness, it is I think profitable to make the mental effort necessary for imagining such a state of things.

A chosen company out of mankind, saved in each successive generation since the beginning of the world, by the unseen agency of God or angels, or both, without any visible means used, or any intimation given to the rest of mankind, that these their fellows were of so very different a character, and

* Non ad eam pertinent avari, raptores, fæneratores. Videntur esse in Ecclesia, non sunt Aug. de Bapt. contr. Don. iv. 1, vi. 3. Ecclesiam veram intelligere non audeo, nisi in sanctis et justis. Ibid v. 27.

going to so very different an eternity from themselves.

This is not unlike the notion which some spiritual persons seem to entertain as the actual truth of the case. They represent religion as consisting exclusively in an unseen commerce or communion between God and the believing soul; and they repudiate as foreign to it, and injurious to it, all outward forms and observances.

I would ask such persons what they conceive to be the appropriate and characteristic duties of Christians from the time of their conversion till the time of their death. Are they to live on in worldliness and sin like those around them? surely not. What then? Are they to live no longer as other men live, but to be a peculiar people, loving God with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themselves? Are they to manifest this love in acts of worship towards God, and acts of affectionate interest and brotherly kindness among their neighbours, especially desirous of their eternal happiness? Grant this, and the fancied spirituality unincumbered with outward means, is immediately dissipated; because you have these Christians employing means, which in their use of them must be visible, on behalf of their friends and neighbours around them. In such a case, all the means adopted would be of man's devising, and might or might not be judicious, but *some* visible means would be inevitable. I have said this to show that the divine institution of outward ordinances,

instead of being a needless encumbrance, is in truth a kind and considerate condescension to our infirmities. It belongs, indeed., to our complex creation, as described in the book of Genesis. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (ii. 7.)

God is a Spirit, God has created Spirits, angels and principalities and powers. The communication which those created spirits hold with the great Father of spirits, is simply and exclusively spiritual. That is, the religion of angels, if we may use such an expression, is suitable to the nature of angels. They being spirits and nothing else, their religion is spiritual and nothing else.

God has created man a compound being, consisting of both body and spirit. The communication which this compound being holds with God, that is, the religion of man, must be suitable to his compound nature. There must be something spiritual in it, answering to his spirit; and there must be something visible and corporeal in it, answering to his body.

From these simple elements it will follow, that the man who makes his religion to consist in visible and corporeal acts and forms, falls short of the truth, forgetting his spirit; and, on the other hand, the man who confines his religion to spiritual and invisible communion, falls short of the truth, forgetting his body. And without meaning any unnecessary or irritating reproach to any one, but simply for the

sake of illustration and consequent clearness, I may add, that the Church of Rome has erred on the one side, and the Society of Friends on the other.

In strict conformity with this reasoning, we find, on reference to the word of God, (the only infallible source of information upon this subject,) that in every stage of Jehovah's dealings with this world, since the creation, not only has man been called to a spiritual worship of God, but also visible bodily observances have been enjoined upon him in the exercise of that worship. The high place—the highest place of true religion is spiritual, for God is a spirit. But in the case of man, the ascent to that place, and the enjoyment of it when reached, have at all times, and under all circumstances, been aided by the authoritative appointment of something visible. The hidden spring of true religion is spiritual; but in every instance in the history of man, God has accompanied it with a visible index. This statement may be exemplified and confirmed by detailed reference to the circumstances of Adam before his original transgression, and after that transgression, of Noah after the deluge, of Abraham after his call to leave his home and country, of the Mosaic ritual, and, finally, of the christian dispensation.

1. Take the case of Adam in his primeval blessedness, created in the image of God, and placed in the garden of Eden. The characteristic of his state was *holy dependence.* All creatures are, and must be, completely and absolutely dependent upon the

great Creator. This principle might have been stated to Adam's mind in words, or communicated to his soul by some spiritual process, and doubtless so it was: but we observe now, as a matter of fact, that it was also exhibited to his body. His body was as dependent for natural life, as his soul was for spiritual life. And accordingly we see in his case not only spiritual communion with God, but also an outward and visible appointment, or ordinance corresponding thereto, a corporeal restriction, a reserved tree, a visible sign of spiritual dependence. A most significant sign, for whose did it prove the garden to be, with all its fruits? Not Adam's own, or he would have been under no restrictions from a higher authority. The prohibited tree, daily before his eyes, was a daily remembrance of the covenant of reservation, so to speak, which formed a part of his lease. This, therefore, was a standing memorial to him, and as he daily refrained from it, it was an outward and visible acknowledgment by him, that he was a tenant, and not the proprietor of the garden. And as neither lives nor years were specified in his lease, he was further reminded, and he did constantly acknowledge, that he was a "tenant at will," subject to ejectment by his great Landlord at any moment.

Thus the revelation of God's absolute sovereignty over all the works of his creation was the part of the dispensation answering to the spirit of his creature, man; and the reserved tree was the part of

the dispensation answering to the body of the creature. The medium through which the former was effectual to man's happiness was willing submission, and that submission was assisted by the latter.

This will explain the depth and malignity of Adam's transgression. God reserved a token of his own sovereignty as the great Proprietor of all things. Under him Adam had the dominion. Of the trees of the garden, in all their rich profusion, he might freely eat; but he was a creature, and the garden contained one outward and visible sign to him of a creature's dependence. The nature of his transgression was therefore an usurpation of independence; or, in other words, a declaration of rebellion against God's sovereignty. It was saying, I will be no longer dependent, I will no longer hold this garden under any restrictions from another, I will have no covenant of reservation in my lease, yea, I will have no lease at all; the garden is my own. I will be a god to myself. I will be as God, independent. His transgression was therefore but too faithful a response to the lying temptation of the devil, "*Ye shall be as gods!*"*

Here also we see the true answer to the infidel cavil against the divine history, grounded on the alleged absurdity of so tremendous a punishment being inflicted upon Adam and his posterity, for so small an offence as eating an apple. Eating an apple was not Adam's offence. His offence was rebellion against that state of dependence in which

* Gen. iii. 5.

God had placed him. The reserved fruit (there is no evidence of what fruit it was—the Jews think it was the grape) was the symbol of that dependence. The smaller the restriction, the more unprovoked and unjustifiable the rebellion. Adam's sin, therefore, instead of being palliated or lessened by the insignificance of the fruit, is thereby aggravated to the uttermost. Surrounded by rich and precious fruits in untold abundance, he did, for the paltry inducement of one fruit more, fly in the face of the Almighty, and blasphemously presume to assert his own independence.

How instructive is this view of the subject! The mind that measures human guilt by the quantity of the transgression, and not by the principle transgressed; the mind that estimates the wickedness of a theft, for instance, by the amount of property stolen, and not by the intrinsic rectitude of the principle of honesty; that mind is thoroughly alienated from God, and dead to his glory. Alive it may be to the claims of man upon his fellow-man, to all that constitutes what men call equity and fair dealing, this is indeed the basis of all human jurisprudence: guilt is estimated and punishment awarded, not on the grounds of principle infringed, but of the *extent* of crime committed. Punishment is apportioned to crime, from the smallest fine or shortest imprisonment, up to the loss of life. This is human equity, but the application of it to religion is fraught with incalculable mischief. It has engen-

dered the idea, that although notorious sinners may deserve hell, yet the same hell cannot possibly be deserved by comparatively small sinners. Hence the purgatory of the heathen, adopted and systematized in the Roman church; and hence a deceitful complacency among the more moral of all denominations, no less destructive than the doctrine of purgatory. The divine law estimates guilt, not by *extent*, but by principle; for thus saith the Holy Ghost by an Apostle, "*There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE! And by another Apostle, He saith, "*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in* ONE *point,* HE IS GUILTY OF ALL. For HE THAT SAID *Do not commit adultery,* SAID ALSO *do not kill,*" &c. (Rom. iii. 22; James ii. 10, 11.)

Here God's reference is to the *principle* of law violated; and an estimate of guilt by the *extent* of the violation is rejected as ungodly. Beware of human maxims in religion. *Is it not a little one,* exclaims the treacherous heart which has regard only to human injury, and no regard to the divine glory. If the matter in hand be a violation of punctuality, it is only a few minutes; if it be a violation of truth, it is only a slight exaggeration; if it be a violation of honesty, it is only the value of a few pence. Children are taught this even in their eating and drinking, receiving things prohibited and hearing it excused by "It was only a little."

Beware, beware, this principle, or rather want of principle, which, as a minister of Christ's church, I feel it my duty to expose and condemn, is the devil's bait to quiet the clamours of human conscience. Yes! *It is only a little*, is a well-contrived opiate which soothes thousands and tens of thousands of rational responsible creatures to everlasting damnation.

But to return; Adam in his unfallen state had an outward and visible ordinance in his religion, as well as inward and spiritual communion with God.

2. Consider, in the second place, fallen man under the first step of the divine dispensation to him. The characteristic of his state was *ruin*. And the characteristic of the appropriate religion which God revealed to him was *remedy*. This was announced to him in words, when the seed of the woman was promised to endure bruising from the serpent, and eventually to destroy the poisonous enemy. But such a revelation to his spirit was not enough; he wanted a corresponding exhibition to his body. And he received it in the institution of sacrifice. The animal was taken; its blood which was its life was poured forth unto death; and its skin supplied a covering for the nakedness of man's shame. Here the spiritual principle of the divine remedy was most significantly made visible. The ruined man beheld that death which had been

threatened upon himself inflicted upon another; and he found the covering of the slain substitute transferred to be his own covering. Thus the revelation of the bruised and bruising seed of the woman was the part of God's dispensation answering to the spirit of his creature; and the sacrificed animal supplying a coat for the man, was the part of God's dispensation answering to the body of his creature. The medium through which the former was to be effectual was faith; and that faith was assisted by the latter.

3. The next distinct step in the divine dispensations was the Deluge. Consider man after the Deluge. The characteristic of his state, in addition to his original dependence and the ruin already incurred, was *terror*, lest another flood should overwhelm him. And the characteristic of the revelation which God made to him, in addition to the remedy already revealed, was *consolation:* special consolation in an assurance that the earth should no more be drowned with water. This was announced to him in words when God said, "And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth, with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth; and I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, neither shall

there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." (Gen. ix. 9—11.) But this revelation to his spirit was not enough—he wanted a corresponding exhibition to his body, and he received it, when God most graciously added, " And this is the *token* of the covenant which I make between you and me and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set *my bow in the cloud*, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." (Gen. ix. 12—17.) Thus the promise that there should not be any more a flood to destroy the earth, was the part of God's dispensation answering to the spirit of his creature; and the bow visible in the cloud was the part of God's dispensation answering to the body of his creature. The medium through which the former was to be effectual, was faith; and that faith was assisted by the latter.

4. The next step was the call of Abraham. It is thus narrated by Stephen, the proto-martyr: "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Charran; and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran, and from thence when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts vii. 2—5.) The special characteristic of Abraham's case when so called, was *personal destitution.* He had neither parent, nor child, nor home, nor country; but was a wandering stranger in his old age, with his wife also old. The characteristic of God's special revelation to him was *personal distinction,* as the father of a family more numerous than the stars of heaven; and the possessor of a land, a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey. This gracious purpose of God concerning him was made known to him in words when God said, "This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number

them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen. xv. 4, 5.) "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (xvii. 8.) But this revelation to his spirit was not enough, he wanted a corresponding exhibition to his body; and he received it in the outward and visible sign of *circumcision.* This was personal; distinguishing him and his family throughout their generations from all other people upon the earth, and distinguishing the possessors of the promised land from all other nations. Thus, God's assurance to him of a family, and a possession, was the part of the divine dispensation answering to his spirit; and the circumcision of himself and of his son, was the part of the dispensation answering to his body. The medium through which the former was to be effectual was faith, and that faith was assisted by the latter. He had faith in God's promise first; that is, his spirit responded truly to God's spiritual communication, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. And then, "he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised?" (Rom. iv. 11.)

5. The next step in the dispensations of God, presents us with a long list of outward and visible ordinances of divine worship.

When the time of the promise drew nigh, which

God had sworn to Abraham, He brought forth his people out of Egypt like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Unto them was the gospel preached as well as unto us. The law of ceremonies given to them, had a shadow of good things to come. Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. Before the eyes of the Israelites were exhibited in most expressive types, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which shall follow.

It were a subject in itself, and a voluminous one, to enter into the particulars of this mosaic preaching of the everlasting gospel. I need only remark, at present, that this dispensation was in strict harmony of principle with its predecessors. Truth, sanctifying saving truth, was the part of it answering to the spirits of the children of Israel: and the visible ceremonial of the Levitical priesthood, and the tabernacle services, formed the part of it answering to their bodies.

But though it is unnecessary here to enlarge upon those details of Judaism which are so fully discussed by the Apostle to the Hebrews: it will be interesting, and, with reference to our next chapter, most profitable, to note some of those Jewish practices, which though founded upon, and growing out of divine institutions, are not so plainly detailed in the sacred volume. For this purpose I refer to Wall's History of Infant Baptism.

"First, then, it is evident that the custom of the

Jews before our Saviour's time, (or, as they themselves affirm, from the beginning of their law,) was to baptize as well as circumcise any proselyte that came over to them from the nations. This does fully appear both from the books of the Jews themselves, and also of others that understood the Jewish customs and have written of them. They reckoned all mankind beside themselves to be in an unclean state, and not capable of being entered into the covenant of Israelites without a washing or baptism to denote their purification from their uncleanness. And this was called the baptizing of them unto Moses.

"They take notice that Moses, (Numb. xv. 15,) orders thus, 'One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger (or proselyte) that sojourns with you.' 'An ordinance for ever in your generations. As you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger,' &c. Now they reckon that the Israelites themselves were at their entering into covenant with God at the time of their receiving the law in Mount Sinai, all of them washed or baptized. So they understood those words. (Exod. xix. 10.) 'And the Lord said unto Moses, go unto all the people and sanctify them to day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day, and the third day the Lord will come down, &c.' They understand the meaning of that command by which Moses

was to sanctify the people on those two days, to be the washing of them; and so that word to sanctify, does commonly signify in the Jewish law, (as several writers have shown by many instances, and I also do in this book give some,) especially when it is spoken of a man sanctifying other men. And Maimonides *Mickvaoth. it, More Nebochim*, pt. 3, c 33, says, this is a rule, that wheresoever in the law the washing of the body or garments is mentioned, it means still the washing of the whole body; and the same is affirmed, Gemara, Babyl. Tit. Jabimoth, c. 4, fol. 46. And so Aban Ezra, on that place of scripture,* where Jacob being to meet God at Bethel, said to his household, be clean and change your garments, understands the washing of their bodies; and Selden† shews by the expositions which the Jewish commentators give on Levit. xi. 25, 28, 40; Levit. xiv. 8, 47; Numb. xix. 10, 21; Numb. xxxi. 24; and several other texts where washing of garments is mentioned, that they always understand washing of the whole body. And for the like understanding of the foresaid place in Exod. xix. 10, quotes Mechilta, *Nachmanid, R. Bechai. Moses Mikotsi*, &c.

"That they gave this (baptism of the Jews, and the command for proselytes to be as the Jews were) as a proof that proselytes must be baptized, appears by the words of Maimonides. For he first says thus; by three things did Israel enter into covenant, by circumcision, and baptism, and sacrifice. Circumcision

* Gen. xxxv. 2. † *De Synedr.* l. 1, c. 3.

was in Egypt, as it is written, no uncircumcised * person shall eat thereof, &c. Baptism was in the wilderness, just before the giving of the law, as it is written,† sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes. And sacrifice as it is said.‡ And he sent young men of the sons of Israel which offered burnt-offerings, &c."

" And so in all ages, when an ethnic is willing to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law; he must be circumcised and baptized, and bring a sacrifice; or if it be a woman, be baptized and bring a sacrifice. As it is written.§ As you are, so shall the stranger be. How are you? by circumcision and baptism, and bringing of a sacrifice. So likewise the stranger (or proselyte) through all generations, by circumcision and baptism and bringing of a sacrifice. And what is the stranger's sacrifice? A burnt-offering of a beast, or two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, both of them for a burnt-offering.

" And at this time, when there is no sacrificing, they must be circumcised, and baptized, and when the temple shall be built, they are to bring the sacrifice.

" A stranger that is circumcised and not baptized, or baptized and not circumcised, he is not a proselyte till he be both circumcised and baptized. And he must be baptized in the presence of three, &c."

* Exod. xii. 48.
† Exod. xix. 10.
‡ Exod. xxiv. 5.
§ Numb. xv. 15.

" Even as they circumcise and baptize strangers, so do they circumcise and baptize servants that are received from heathens, into the name of servitude, &c

" When a man or a woman comes to join as a proselyte, they make diligent inquiry concerning such, lest they come to get themselves under the law for some riches that they should receive, or for dignity that they should obtain, or for fear. If it be a man, they inquire whether he have not set his affection on some Jewish woman, or a woman, her affection on some young man of Israel. If no such like occasion be found in them, they make known unto them the weightiness of the yoke of the law, and the toil that is in the doing thereof, above that which people of other lands have, to see if they will go back. If they take it upon them, and withdraw not, and they see that they come of love; then they receive them, &c.

" Therefore, the judges received no proselyte all the days of David and Solomon. Not in David's days lest they should have come of fear; nor in Solomon's lest they should have come because of the kingdom and great prosperity which Israel then had.

For whoso comes from the heathens for anything of the vanities of this world, he is no righteous proselyte.

" The books do speak of this washing or baptism as absolutely necessary, and an ordinance without which none was to be counted a proselyte. So

" Gemara Babylon, ad tit. *Cherithoth*, c. 2.

" The proselytes entered not into covenant but by circumcision, baptism, and sprinkling of blood.

" And tit. *Jabimoth*, c. 4.

" He is no proselyte unless he be circumcised and baptized. And, if he be not baptized, he remains a Gentile (or pagan). And there is in that chapter a proof given of that opinion of the necessity which I shall have occasion by-and-by to mention.

" Maimonides says the same thing as we saw in the chapter I quoted before.*

" Also the Talmud, *Tract Repudii*, speaking of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law.

" He was made a proselyte by circumcision and immersion in water.

" This custom of the Jews continued after Christ's time, and after their expulsion from the Holy Land, and continues (as I have showed from Leo Modena) to this day; if there be any that now-a-days do turn proselytes to their religion. Wherever they sojourned, if they found any of that country that chose to be of their religion, they would not admit him unless he would first be washed or baptized by them. And some heathen writers do express a great deal of scorn and disdain at this their valuing themselves upon their own purity, in comparison with other nations."

" The ancient Christians, especially such of them as lived in places where they could have converse

* *Isuri Bia*, c. 13.

with the learned Jews, and might learn from them the meaning of the Hebrew phrases used in the Old Testament, do also speak of this baptism of the Jews.

"So Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 39, shewing the preference of the Christian baptism before the Jewish, says, 'Moses gave a baptism, but that was with water only. And before that they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. But these were but a type (or figure) of ours, as Paul also understands it.'

"And before them all, Tertullian having in his book of baptism, c. 5, shown by several particulars that the heathens had used of old a certain rite of baptizing, which they said was for their regeneration and for the forgiveness of their sins, applies to it this observation, "Here we see the aim of the devil to ape (or imitate) the things of God. Since he also sets up a baptism for his disciples.'" *

(6.) The next dispensation is the Christian—(no essential change took place when the temple was built by Solomon. It was built after the pattern of the tabernacle, and, though in outward splendour it vastly excelled; the priesthood and services remained unaltered).

The dispensation of the grace of God, under which we now live, resembles all the former dispensations in this essential characteristic, that it contains a part answering to the spirits of men, and a part answering to their bodies. When the fulness of the time

* *Wall.* Hist. Inft. Bap. Intr.

was come, there was not only a proclamation of God's love made to man's faith, but there was also a manifestation of that love made to man's sight. The eternal Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and they beheld his glory. On this the Apostle John insists. (St. John i. 1, 14; 1 John i. 1, 2.)

His body was not a spiritual thing, revealed to man's faith; it was an actual, visible, tangible thing, presented to man's bodily senses.

His righteousness was not only inward and spiritual, to be seen of God, but outward, moral, and ceremonial also, to be seen of men. His sufferings were not only inward and spiritual, but outward and visible also. It was not only true that his soul was sorrowful, but also that his body was tortured. His death was not only inward and spiritual, but outward and visible also. It was not only true that his soul was forsaken of God, which is spiritual death; but also that his heart's blood flowed from his pierced side, which is bodily death. His resurrection, in like manner, was not only inward and spiritual, but outward and visible also. It was not only true that his human soul was sustained in high and holy communion with God, which is spiritual resurrection, (and in which sense the members of his body the church are already risen with him,) but also that his human body was quickened in the sepulchre, and instead of falling into corruption, was transformed into an incorruptible immortal body, which is outward, visible, corporeal resurrection. His glory

also, which shall be revealed, is not inward and spiritual only, but outward and visible also. Of this his disciples on Mount Tabor had a specimen; and in this all his disciples shall have participation at his second advent. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

But it may be objected that this combination of spiritual and visible in Christ himself, is not characteristic of the whole dispensation; that it was exhibited to but a very few of his disciples, and that since his ascension to heaven and the mission of the Holy Spirit; this is purely and exclusively a spiritual dispensation, and the worship of God purely and exclusively spiritual, without any intermixture of visible ordinances. But what is the fact? A fact which proves most conclusively the principle laid down in this chapter to be of invariable application. The fact is that even now, under the dispensation of the Spirit: now, when the great Antitype is come; the one offering once offered; the everlasting Priest entered into the true holy place: now, when spiritual worship and inward communion are explained beyond what they were under any former dispensation: now, when the Lord has said, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth:" (St. John iv. 24:) even now, man is not called to an unmixed, unassisted spiritual service, as though he had no body; or as though his body were mere clay, to be despised now and corrupted for ever. No, the fact is that even now, outward visible things are instituted in chris-

tian worship. God treats us still suitably to the two component parts of our creation, soul and body. True it is, indeed, that the outward things now commanded are reduced in simplicity to the easiest possible access, and the most universal convenience for their use; still they are to be used. We proceed to consider them.

But, first, a brief expostulation with some, who though still among us as members of our congregations, are in a very unsatisfactory state of mind on the subject of ordinances. I do not mean those only, nor do I now refer to those chiefly, who are still, unhappily, in a worldly state of mind, and really unconcerned about this or any other branch of true religion; but to those who are spiritual, and whose spirituality is itself the cause of their embarrassment in this matter. They cannot see their way, clearly and comfortably, to the use of the outward and visible elements of this fallen world in the exercise of spiritual religion. They say, or rather they think, when the subject presents itself to their minds, that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost —that what enters into a man's mouth can neither defile nor sanctify the man—that neither is he that eateth any better, neither he that eateth not any worse—that the heart is the seat of true religion, that with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.

Knowing and feeling the precious truth expressed

by such portions of Holy Scripture, and not seeing what washing or sprinkling with water, eating bread, or drinking wine, can have to do with it; persuaded, also, that if there be anything valuable in the outward ordinance, it can only be in its bearing upon the inward and spiritual blessing which they feel they already possess; and naturally preferring the greater above the lesser, they are disposed to be contented with the thing signified, and so not to attach any great importance to the sign. In this they are the more confirmed by re-action from the extravagant, amounting to superstitious reverence paid by many to mere outward observances.

It is not my intention to attempt to interfere with, as I should indeed be deeply grieved in any way to diminish, the high estimate which such persons set upon spiritual religion. That lovely plant is truly in its topmost bough an affair of the heart by faith, the fellowship of man's spirit with the Father of spirits through Jesus Christ; and outward ordinances are valuable in themselves only as they become means of affecting and sanctifying the heart. Agreed! agreed! No reader can feel this more strongly than it is the writer's hearty desire to teach and impress it. But, where have we learned this? And how do we know it? We have learned it in the Holy Scriptures, the sacred word of our God. Even so. For the reality of our best blessings, our warmest emotions, and most cherished hopes, we appeal to the Scriptures. We are too deeply im-

pressed with the treachery of the heart, and the waywardness of the imagination of fallen man, to place dependence upon any feelings or experiences, however apparently excellent, which will not stand the test of reference to the written and unchanging Word of God. This is our security.

It is so: and let its legitimate consequence be fairly considered. Referring to the written Word of God, we must take it as we find it. We are not at liberty to take selections of it only, rejecting or neglecting the remainder. We must, in fairness, take it without partiality; and, doing so, while we find it our security for all that is inward and spiritual in true religion; we find it also our warrant and authority for the use of certain outward and visible ordinances. It is written, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." True; and it is written again, "Take, *eat; drink* ye all of this." It is written, "Repent, and believe the gospel." True; and it is written also, "Repent, and be *baptized*." Thus, these outward ordinances rest upon the same authority with spiritual religion; the one cannot be defended without a reference to Holy Scripture; and with such a reference, fairly made, the other cannot be neglected.

But though upon the same footing with regard to the authority from which they emanate, these things are not upon the same footing with regard to the appeal they make to man's moral sense and inward experience. We can see a reason for the one, and

not for the other. Well, supposing this to be the case, and that we equally receive and dutifully comply with both, in which case are we most simply and absolutely obeying the will of God? In the case where we see another reason for the thing in addition to his will? or in the case where we can see no reason but simply and exclusively that He has desired it? Was it concerning such a state of mind as this invites us to, that Christ said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein"? And may not this be indeed the high reason for positive institutions, that God requires of us obedience of faith as well as obedience of understanding?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, MILITANT HERE ON EARTH —BAPTISM.

Baptism a divine institution—Its origin Jewish—Its practice familiar previous to the commandment of the Lord Jesus concerning it—Its adoption into the christian church—Reason for positive institutions—The form of baptism as appointed by Christ includes, 1. *The use of water;* 2. *An acknowledgment of the Trinity—Does not include,* 1. *Any precise form of words;* 2. *Any precise description of persons as its administrators;* 3. *Any precise mode or measure in the application of the water—The proper subjects for baptism:* 1. *Adults who believe wherever the gospel comes;* 2. *Adults who profess to believe;* 3. *The infant children of baptized parents—The nature of the efficacy of baptism—Death, burial, resurrection, with Jesus Christ—When genuine "baptism doth save"—But it may not be genuine—Then it does not save—How should a christian church speak of it, but as the Apostles did; though they have many failures such as the Apostles had?—The English Church Service.*

That Christian Baptism is of divine institution, is express and clear. On this point, there does not seem to be any room left for difference of opinion among those who receive the scriptures as the word

of God. On many questions connected with the continuance, the mode of administration, and the efficacy of baptism, important differences of opinion exist; but that baptism itself was commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ is not disputed. I do not, therefore, specify this point as a matter requiring proof, but as a preliminary statement, needful for clearness' sake, and important because it reminds us, that whatever difficulties or embarrassments may attend the details of this subject, the Lord's express appointment remains unquestioned, and that consequently no one professing real reverence for the Lord's authority, can be, consistently, unconcerned in this matter.

I propose to consider—the origin of baptism, its adoption as an ordinance of the christian church, its form of administration, its proper subjects, and the nature of its efficacy.

(1.) The origin of baptism.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

These celebrated words do not contain the original institution of baptism; though they do contain the authoritative adoption of it as an ordinance of the christian church. We have already seen, that years before these words were uttered, baptism was commonly practised among the Jews. It is spoken of at the commencement of the New Testament, as a

thing with which the reader is supposed to be familiar, and which consequently did not require any formal explanation. No definition of it is given; no account of its origin; but we are at once, and abruptly, introduced to it as a matter of fact in the history of John the son of Zacharias. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." . . . . "Then went to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were *baptized* of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." * On the supposition of baptism being quite a new thing, then and there propounded for the first time, this is a most unaccountable narrative. And such a supposition is rendered more than unaccountable; it is rejected as absolutely impossible, by the remonstrance addressed to John by the deputation sent to him from Jerusalem. "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" † It is here clearly implied, that in the person of Messiah, or of Elias, or of that prophet, baptism would not have been any

* St. Matt. iii. 1, 2, 5, 6. † St. John i. 19—25.

matter of surprise; but it was a matter of surprise in a person who denied himself to be any one of these expected characters. This proves that the subject of baptism, in some sense, was familiar to the Jewish church.

For instruction in some of the customs of that church I refer to St. Mark, at the commencement of the seventh chapter: "There came together unto him the Pharisees and certain of the Scribes which came from Jerusalem: and when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashed) hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and *all* the Jews"—it was a catholic custom among them—"except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables," or beds.

Here we learn the existence of a practice of ceremonial separation, or consecration, to God's service, by the washing of water. These washings are called by the Evangelist *baptisms*—βαπτισμοὺς. The Jews considered themselves, on their return from the market, unclean until they were baptized. They considered also that their vessels and couches were unclean, unless they were frequently baptized. This is indeed enumerated amongst the traditions of the elders, and therefore I do not refer to it in justification of the practice, but merely as witnessing to the

fact, and thereby proving the familiarity of the Jews with baptism of some sort. Whence could this have arisen? Of what truth were these traditions an abuse? Of what duties were these practices superstitious exaggerations?

There was an ordinance of the law of Moses, an abuse of which seems clearly to have given rise to the practices in question; and to have rendered familiar to Jewish minds, a connexion between washing or sprinkling with water, and separation from everything unclean to the peculiar and holy service of God. I refer to the nineteenth chapter of the book of Numbers. After describing the burning of the red heifer, and the mixing of the ashes with water, the commandment of God to Moses was to keep it for the congregation, "for a water of separation, a purification for sin." "And it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever." And "whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not *sprinkled* upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him."*

Here we have the original divine institution of the sprinkling of water on the flesh as an ordinance of religion. Hence the connexion between peculiar sanctity and washing or sprinkling with water.

* Numb. xix. 13.

Hence, also, the peculiar force of the Lord's language by the prophet Ezekiel, in his beautiful promise of final sanctifying mercy to the Jewish nation.

"I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I *sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean;* from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," &c.*

That the Jews, in after ages, should have superstitiously abused this ordinance, as they did most others, is natural enough. Anxious to diminish, even to the extent of making void, the *moral* commandments of God; they were not content with the amount of ceremonial observances divinely prescribed, but loaded them with human additions. But here, in the sacred record, is the ordinance itself, instituting the connexion between washing or sprinkling with water, and cleanness of separation to the service of God in the tabernacle. These washings were baptisms; and hence the obvious and ready connexion between any peculiar call to sanctity, and some special baptism.

When John Baptist came, exposing the iniquity of the nation, and calling men to repentance, his

* Ezek. xxxvi. 24—26.

ministry proved effectual to make multitudes feel their uncleanness. And an impression going abroad that he was Messiah, at whose coming they expected a call to peculiar sanctity, it became their obvious course to seek at his hands a water of separation, a washing, or sprinkling, or baptism, of peculiar efficacy. This renders the history of John, as narrated by the evangelists, perfectly easy and natural. He came preaching, in no ordinary strain, in the wilderness of Judea. The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts concerning John, whether he was the Christ or not. The more they heard of his penetrating calls to repentance, the more they felt their own uncleanness; and being in the habit of having recourse, in seasons of uncleanness, to some washing, or sprinkling, or baptism, they now flock in multitudes to John, and receive his baptism, confessing their sins. Such is the narrative in the third chapter of St. Matthew. This throws light upon another circumstance of deep and lively interest recorded in the same chapter. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him; but John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to *fulfil all righteousness.* Then he suffered him."*

How was it a matter of righteousness in Jesus to be baptized? If baptism had not been commanded of God, there could have been no righteousness in

* St. Matt. iii. 13—15.

submitting to it. We have seen, however, that it was commanded, and existed as a standing ordinance in the Jewish church, of which Jesus was a member. The occasion of using it was upon any uncleanness being contracted. In the case of Jesus, no uncleanness was, or could be, contracted *personally;* but if, standing as the sinner's substitute, and so considered an unclean thing—for he was *made sin* for us *—he was now to be separated to that peculiar service of God which constituted the ministry of the last three years of his life; it was most fitting that his entrance on that ministry should be marked by some appropriate ordinance, as his entrance into the Jewish church had been marked by circumcision. There was an ordinance prescribed in the law of Moses. It had been abused by the nation, and superstitiously corrupted. The ministry and baptism of John called to national reformation. It was the clear, bounden, righteous duty of every Jew to obey this call; and Jesus was forward to fulfil this, as well as every other particular of perfect righteousness, as man.

This explains, also, why the followers of Jesus, as well as the followers of John, were baptized. Seeing his miracles, hearing his discourses, believing his divine mission, feeling their own uncleanness, and called to a new and devoted service of God, they entered upon it by water of separation. They were baptized.

Such were the circumstances, with reference to

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

this matter, under which the period arrived when Jesus was to depart from this world, and entrust the management of his church to human instrumentality.

Had he designed to cut off all connexion (as some allege) between the Old Testament and the New, to dislocate the christian church altogether out of the Jewish framework which had hitherto existed, and to institute, *de novo*, ordinances of a totally different character from anything hitherto known or practised; surely the most obvious course would have been to employ Gentile men, who were in no way implicated in Jewish habits or observances, and who would, therefore, set forth on the new work with a singleness and simplicity unalloyed by national prepossessions. Or if, for other reasons, Jewish men must be employed, surely common prudence would have suggested that they should not be desired to adopt into the new system any practice inseparably connected with the old. Or, at the very least, if such a practice must be adopted, it would have been no more than was demanded by common honesty and candour, plainly and distinctly to have apprised them of the essential difference between the old and the new modes of exercising it; and warned them in a way not to be mistaken, against carrying any of their Jewish habits into their new mission. Instead of this, however, we find him employing Jewish men, adopting a Jewish ordinance, and giving no warning against the Jewish use of it.

And thus we are led, from the origin, to consider, in the second place,

II. The adoption of baptism as an ordinance of the christian church.

This, as a matter of fact, has been anticipated. Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

It is only as a matter of fact that we are capable of taking cognizance of this institution. We are wholly incompetent to pronounce, or to form, any correct judgment of the wisdom or propriety, in the abstract, of such an appointment as this. "Vain man would be wise;" and when he can assign no reason, he would hastily conclude that no reason can be assigned. But, in some things, God giveth no account of his matters. He refuseth to be arraigned at the bar of created intelligence; and then it becomes the highest and most perfect exercise of finite wisdom, to bow without a question or a murmur before the well attested announcements of infinite sovereignty. To such subjects belong the *positive* institutions, as contrasted with the moral commandments of revealed religion. Man can assign a reason to himself, and thereupon becomes satisfied with the propriety of God's commandments, against murder, adultery, and theft. These crimes do harm, such harm as man is competent to appreciate. But he cannot so satisfy himself of the pro-

priety of God's commandment against bowing down to an image, for what harm can that do? or of God's commandment to observe the *seventh* day rather than the sixth, or the eighth, or the tenth; or of God's commandments to wash or sprinkle with water; and to eat bread and drink wine as religious duties.

The allegiance of men's hearts in general to these positive institutions, is very different from their allegiance of heart to moral laws; making it but too manifest that they are influenced vastly more by their own reason than by God's authority. The moral laws which claim and receive their deference, do so, not as expressions of God's authority, but as commending themselves to man's reason. This is clear; because if expressions of God's authority, *as such*, had power over men; positive institutions would be as carefully and conscientiously attended to, as moral laws. What, then, if this should be the reason, or at least one reason, and an important one, for such positive institutions, that they should be for a sign between God and men, to try whether men will indeed attend to God's commandments *as his*, without any additional or collateral inducement derived from the deductions of man's own reason, or the apparent injury or advantage of his fellow-men? And what if the highest characteristic of a man's religion, its *godliness*, its real unfeigned regard to God himself, be supremely tested, not by his truth or honesty, or charity, or any other moral

virtue, which he may be induced to practise by other and lower considerations; but by his remembrance of the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy, and by his dutiful reverence for baptism and the Lord's Supper, which urge their claim upon him, more singly and exclusively as witnesses for God?

We proceed to consider in the third place,

III. The *form* of baptism as adopted and commanded by our Lord.

On this point it would be highly satisfactory to ascertain what things the mode of administering baptism, as appointed by Christ, *did* include, so that their presence is absolutely essential to the integrity of the ordinance; and what things, afterwards introduced and practised by man, the Lord's appointment did *not* include, so that their presence is not essential.

The form of baptism, as commanded by Christ, did include,

(1.) The use of water.

That the Apostles so understood their divine Master is very obvious. It is proved by their preaching and by their conduct, as recorded in the book of their Acts. Their preaching contained the oft-repeated exhortation, "Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins." And in performing, for those who heard them, the act thus commanded, it was their practice literally to use water.

Should any member of the Society of Friends—

for objectors to this part of our subject are chiefly confined to that society—be induced to read, or listen to what is here written, I would affectionately request him to weigh fairly and dispassionately the evidence contained in the one narrative of Philip the Deacon, and the Ethiopian Eunuch. It is not necessary to cite the introductory circumstances, but in the sequel we read that the Eunuch asked Philip concerning a passage in Isaiah, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the Eunuch said, See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?"*

Here let us pause, and ask ourselves candidly what but Philip's preaching upon the subject of baptism, and baptism by water, as the duty of every believer in Jesus, could have suggested to the Eunuch the proposal which he made on seeing water by the way-side? If Philip had made no mention of baptism, or if, in mentioning it, he had confined it to spiritual feeling, excited in the heart by the Holy Ghost, where would have been the connexion between such instruction on his part, and the proposal made to him by the Eunuch?

If it be alleged that there was was nó such connexion in reality, and that the Eunuch's proposal was an unauthorized fancy of his own: we reply first, the supposition is wholly gratuitous and most

* Acts viii. 34—36.

unnatural; but chiefly we reply, how is it to be accounted for, that the inspired instructor treated, as he did, the unauthorized fancy of this heathen man? He spoke in reply to it, in the most solemn manner, approving of it, and saying, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And then he acted upon it. When the Eunuch confessed his faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Philip commanded the chariot to stand still: "And they went down both of them into the water, Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him." *

On the supposition of the use of water being a part of the divine institution, and so understood, preached and practised by the apostles; the whole narrative is simple and natural. The Eunuch's proposal, and Philip's treatment of it, are satisfactorily accounted for. On any other supposition, the facts here recorded are wholly inexplicable.

This is corroborated by the language of St. Peter to Cornelius and his household. They had received the Holy Ghost, not only in his inward influence, but also in some of his miraculous gifts. The believing Jews who had accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius were astonished, "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." Had it been lawful, in any case, to consider the use of water superseded by the previous bestowal of spiritual gifts, here was the occasion; but, instead of this, the Apostle did pre-

* Acts viii. 37, 38.

cisely the reverse. He said, " Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ?" *

We fairly conclude, therefore, that the apostolical practice, and consequently the divine institution of baptism, included the use of water, and of course, as the inevitable result, that they who have not received baptism *by water*, have not received the baptism which our Lord Jesus Christ commanded—have not complied with this condition, which the Lord combined with faith, as generally indispensable to salvation.

How far they who have received such baptism, but who are living in habitual disregard of the water part of it, as a mere unmeaning form, are partakers of this guilt in the sight of the Lord, it may be very profitable for themselves to inquire.

(2.) The form of baptism as commanded by Christ, did include an acknowledgment of the three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This is the name of the true God, and this is his memorial for ever, and there is none other God but he. Into this name the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to be baptized: not into the name of the supposed God of nature or providence, —the idol of the deist, and the object of slothful unexamined acknowledgment, by tens of thousands

* Acts x. 44—47.

who profess and call themselves Christians—but into the name, the one comprehensive name, of the one only living and true God, Creator, Redeemer, Comforter; possessing personal resources at once for the manifestation of his love, and the vindication of his law; the God of salvation; the just God of free salvation. That the divine institution of baptism included an open acknowledgment of this glorious name, is manifest from the language of Jesus already cited—"Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in, or into, the name (one name) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

It is true we find the Apostle Peter commanding the brethren to be "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." * But this is a form of expression, involving—as the Apostles used it—an acknowledgment of the whole Godhead. For the Father—as they taught—was manifested in the Son, Jesus Christ the Lord; and no man could truly call on, or truly receive, Jesus Christ as Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Although, therefore, a variation in the language to be used might be pleaded as allowable, because of the difference between the words of Jesus and the words of his Apostle; yet there is no difference in the acknowledgment of the Godhead in Trinity, involved in the language of both.

It is true we read of some persons who had been baptized, and who upon inquiring afterwards, said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be

* Acts ii. 38.

any Holy Ghost." But those persons had not received *christian* baptism. Their case is recorded at the beginning of the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, and the context is strongly corroborative of our position. "It came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Upon this the Apostle expressed his astonishment, asking, "Unto what then wereye baptized?" As if he had said, You cannot possibly have been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; for if you had, you must have heard of and acknowledged the Holy Ghost: unto what then were ye baptized? It appeared, on explanation, that they had been baptized only "to John's baptism." I say *only*, implying that John's baptism stopped short of christian baptism; because I find the expression, and the implication it contains, in full force, in the twenty-fifth verse of the preceding chapter.* Having been baptized with "only John's baptism," the disciples at Ephesus had not yet heard of the Holy Ghost; but had they been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, as the apostles used that name, they must have heard of the Holy Ghost. Paul explained the difference, and then, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."†

* Acts xviii. 24, 25. † Ibid. xix. 1—5.

We conclude, therefore, that the apostolical practice, and consequently the divine institution of baptism, included an announcement on the part of the baptizer, and an acknowledgment on the part of the baptized, of the persons in the sacred Trinity: and of course, as an inevitable result, that they who have not received a baptism which acknowledges and proclaims the Trinity, have not received the baptism which the Lord commanded—have not complied with the condition which the Lord combined with faith, as generally indispensable to salvation.

These two—the use of water, and the acknowledgment of the Trinity—are the only things which I find in scripture so inseparably essential to baptism, as that the absence of either of them does, and must, *ipso facto*, vitiate the ordinance.

It will be profitable to consider some of those things, afterwards introduced and insisted on by men, which the Lord's appointment and the Apostle's practice did *not* include: and which, therefore, may or may not be present, without vitally affecting the divine institution.

(1.) No precise form of words is prescribed as of necessary use in christian baptism.

We have already seen, that there is a variation between the words of Jesus in his commandment to his disciples, and the very words used by the Apostles Paul and Peter. The commandment of

Jesus was that baptism should be "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The way in which the Apostles obeyed this command, in the instances referred to, was by baptizing or commanding to be baptized, "in the name of the Lord Jesus." This phrase, as they used it, and explained it, was inseparable from an acknowledgment of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Therefore in using it as they did concerning baptism, they were substantially obeying their Lord's commandment, though not reciting his identical words. And now, whether we use the Lord's own words, without any deviation even in the letter; or adopt the apostolical mode of expression, in the apostolical meaning and explanation of it, which is tantamount to our Lord's words: we are complying with all that, on this point, is declared in holy Scripture to be essential to the institution.

We, of the Church of England, use the Lord's own form of words in the very act of baptism. But in our service connected therewith, we have added and prescribed many, very many, words besides. These all, however valuable for other purposes, may, or may not, be used without vitiating the ordinance. They may not indeed be omitted, or altered, any of them, without violating the compact by which we minister in the English church; but they may be wholly omitted, or more or less altered, or others may be used instead of them or in addition to them, without any real vital interference with the Lord's

appointment. They belong to those ceremonies "ordained only by man's authority" concerning which it is truly said by our English Reformers, that they need not "be in all places one, and utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word."*

Let it be understood then, that in defending our church baptismal service, we design only to prove that nothing is ordained in it contrary to God's word written; and that the use of it, as it is, is indispensable towards true filial affiance to the Church of England: but that we have no design to prove, or to assert—neither do we wish to feel, far otherwise—that agreement in our service, or the use of it, is necessary to true and valid christian baptism.

(2.) No precise description is given of the persons qualified to baptize.

On this point we are left to inferential reasoning from the facts recorded; and the conclusion to be drawn appears to me to be, that the qualification in question was not confined to any one class of persons. It is written generally concerning "the twelve," that they baptized.† It is clear that St. Paul, although he declares his mission to have been "not to baptize but to preach the gospel," yet in some instances did himself baptize.‡ We have seen that

* Art. xxxiv. † St. John iv. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 14—17.

Philip baptized. All these persons were ordained to a sacred office: the twelve by the Lord himself on earth, St Paul by a special manifestation of the Lord from heaven, and Philip by the laying on of the Apostle's hands. Had the scriptural narrations of baptisms been confined to these, though without any direct and specific precept upon the subject; the fair inference would surely be that, no persons are scripturally qualified to baptize, except persons ordained, either by extraordinary miraculous interference from heaven, or by the ordinary laying on of hands.

But there are other incidents in the sacred narrative, rendering such a conclusion, to say the least, doubtful: too doubtful, to bear the tremendous weight which some seem disposed to build upon it.

There is no proof that the person who baptized Saul of Tarsus, had himself been ordained. In the narrative, there is no intimation of it; and the unforced inference from the whole, seems to me, that he was not. He is indeed called a "disciple," but so were all those who were converted, and not those only who were ordained.* St. Luke describes him thus: "There was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias:"† and St. Paul speaking of him afterwards, says, "One Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me."‡

* Acts xi. 26. † Acts ix. 10.

‡ Acts xxii. 12.

The absence, in such a case, of all mention of, or allusion to, his office as an ordained minister of the church is in itself expressive; and the fact that he had a good report of all the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, is scarcely compatible with his exercise of the christian ministry in that city. When Saul began to exercise that ministry there; instead of having still a good report of the Jews, he became an object of their inveterate hostility. "They took counsel to kill him . . . . and they watched the gates, day and night, to kill him."*

It would seem rather, that Ananias, a devout man according to the law, was a private disciple of Jesus; whose avocations had not engaged him in any open aggressive advocacy of Christianity; so that Christian though he was, he still retained a fair reputation among the Jews. And if this be so, then we have here an instance of baptism administered by a Christian in private life, not ordained to any office in the church, and not heard of except on this single occasion.

If it be urged that the Lord's own special mission of this man, by a supernatural communication to him in a vision, was of itself sufficient authority, and superseded the necessity of ordination in his case; it may be fairly replied, that granting this fully, we have here an instance of our Lord himself selecting and sending for the administration of this ordinance, a

* Acts ix. 23, 24.

private unordained Christian. The Lord's supernatural appearance to Saul of Tarsus, did not supersede the necessity of his baptism, because baptism was indispensable to christian discipleship. Upon what principle then, could the Lord's supernatural appearance to Ananias, supersede the necessity of his ordination, had ordination been indispensable to the administration of baptism?

Who baptized Cornelius the centurion, and his household? We have no sufficient reason for believing that the Apostle Peter did it. The language of the narrative is, not that he baptized them, but that "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."* It would seem that feeling, as his brother Paul felt, that Jesus had sent him, not to baptize but to preach the gospel; and beholding in the case of Cornelius and his household, the glorious effects of his preaching, he had delegated to others, the baptism of these gentile believers. Then the question recurs, to whom? We learn in the narrative, that some converted Jews from Joppa, "certain of the circumcision which believed,"† accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius; but we have no reason to suppose that there was any ordained minister of the company except Peter himself. To whom then could he have delegated the administration of the ordinance of baptism, but to some private unordained Christian?

The uncertainty, to say no more, which is thus

* Acts x. 48. † Acts x. 23, 45.

introduced, as to the description of persons by whom christian baptism may be administered, is full of merciful consideration of our circumstances. For if it were unequivocally proved that no baptism is valid except that which is given by an ordained minister; and that no ordination is valid except that which is in succession, without a link wanting from the Apostles; it would be a matter, I say not of difficulty, but in the present state of our ecclesiastical history, a matter of impossibility, for any man in Christendom, to attain to a satisfactory certainty as to whether he had been baptized or not. Seeing, then, that it has pleased God to allow us to fall into such circumstances with reference to ordination; we hail it as one of his "tender mercies," that he has given us reason to hope that our baptism may be all that he graciously intended it to be, whatever obscurity may hang over our pedigree of orders.

And now, though we honour the order, as we have it, yet under special circumstances we do well to recognise the validity of christian baptism, where water has been used, and the holy Trinity acknowledged, although the administrator may not have been an ordained minister.

(3.) Touching the water; neither quantity, nor temperature, nor manner of application, are distinctly specified.

In our Lord's authoritative commandment to his disciples, as recorded in the last chapter of St Matthew, there is nothing of the kind specified. The

same may be said of the parallel passage in St. Mark; and also of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus.

We come then to examine the language and practice of the Apostles, and still we find nothing of the kind specified.

On the day of Pentecost, three thousand persons were baptized in Jerusalem. It is clear beyond controversy, that this took place in the city, and that it was baptism by water; but there is a marked silence in the narrative as to the mode or measure in which the water was applied. It is unnatural, involving almost a physical impossibility, to suppose, that all the converts on that memorable occasion, were baptized at the same place, on the same day. The obvious course of the proceeding was, that, being convinced by the gracious power of the Holy Ghost, working with St. Peter's sermon; they then dispersed, and some being baptized in one place, some in another, some in houses, some in pools, some probably in the brook Cedron adjoining the walls, the prodigious number of three thousand were baptized in the course of the day. This appears to involve as an inevitable consequence, that various modes were adopted in the application of the water. No instructions were given for uniformity of practice. The thing was not material.

The next account of baptisms is the history of the converts in Samaria; and here again there is a total silence in the narrative, as to any special mode

of conducting the ordinance. "When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." *

Doubtless, all things were done "decently and in order;" and it is reasonable to suppose, nay, I think to conclude, that while water was certainly used, yet it was not used in such manner or quantity, as to impose upon the converts the necessity of undressing, or of indecently wetting their apparel. All I am here contending for is, that there is no specific form of administration, no special mode or measure of applying the water, so commanded as to be binding upon our consciences, as essential to the ordinance.

The next instance is the one already referred to, of the Ethiopian Eunuch. Here was a case of baptism to be administered, not in a city to a multitude of converts, but in a remote district of the country, and to a single individual. The place was "the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is a desert," and where an actual physical hindrance might have arisen from want of water. But as they travelled, "they came to a certain water." The sacred historian adds not a word descriptive of this water. It is left to the imagination of the reader, to determine whether it was a shallow pool by the way side, such as might be found even in a desert after heavy rain, or a pool of sufficient depth to cover a man's body, or a running stream, or a nameless river. All we learn to a

* Acts viii. 12.

certainty is, that there was water. "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him."* How deep they went into the water we are not informed; and here again scope is given to the imagination of the reader. One may fancy water of sufficient depth easily to cover over the entire body of the Eunuch, to be baptized, and of course of Philip also the baptiser, and may deem the matter of their apparel, whether laid aside for the occasion, or immersed with them as utterly unworthy any grave consideration. Another, calling to remembrance the custom of wearing sandals, may picture to himself the two men, without even a passing inconvenience to their apparel, stepping into the water a few inches deep; as it is equally probable the multitudes did, who were baptized by John in Jordan.

The next instance recorded, is the baptism of Saul of Tarsus. It is clear from the narrative, that this took place in the house where he was lodging. There is no description given of the precise manner of it, but it is sufficiently obvious that it could have had no outward conformity with the manner of the Eunuch's baptism. The same may be said of the baptism of Cornelius and his household, and of Lydia and her household; and still more remarkably of the jailer, at Philippi.† It is a matter of undeniable certainty, that this baptism took place in the jail, in the night, and without any previous preparation or even intention. It was bonâ fide impromptu; and

* Acts viii. 38. † Acts ix. 18; x. 47; xvi. 15, 33.

no sufficient reason has ever been assigned for supposing it probable, that there was ready, in a heathen jail, a vessel of water of such dimensions and convenience that the Apostle and jailer could walk into it, or to admit of the immersion of the jailer and his family. In the absence of detailed description, the probabilities are certainly on the side of a very different and more sparing use of water. Whatever may have been the precise mode adopted on this occasion, it must, I think, be conceded, after a fair collation of all the instances referred to, that no specific form of administration in these particulars, is indispensable to the ordinance.

Here again our practice in the Church of England, is in happy harmony with sound scriptural deduction. We do not confine ourselves to any one mode of applying the water, as if it were essential. Total immersion under the water, copious pouring out of the water, gentle sprinkling of the water, all are included in our free practice. Feeling ourselves in this point scripturally strong, we can easily bear the infirmities of the weak; and if any of the brethren be so scrupulous as conscientiously to consider any one specific method essential to the ordinance, while we affectionately expostulate against the narrowness, we can gracefully condescend to the weakness.

IV. We proceed to consider, in the fourth place, *the proper subjects* for baptism; or, in other words, the persons to whom it is scriptural to administer this ordinance.

Our Lord himself describes them briefly, but comprehensively—ALL NATIONS. "Go ye and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them." Heretofore only the Jewish nation had been disciples of the true God; but now, henceforth, discipleship is not to be confined to Jews. Now, the long concealed purpose, the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, is revealed; namely, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel. Now, the vessel of salvation, which had long been moored in a Jewish dock, is to be launched forth upon the wide sea, that her precious cargo, even the unsearchable riches of Christ, may be carried to the ends of the earth.

Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them. This is Christ's command. The desire and aim of his obedient followers can be nothing less than this. They could never with any consistency be content with the discipleship and baptism of *some* nations. So long as there remained upon earth, any nation undiscipled and unbaptized, the command of the Lord urged them forward in the good work. Hence the Apostle Paul's anxiety to break new ground, to enlarge the sphere of his labours, to make disciples in every place. "Yea," he says, "so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, "to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall

understand."* And again, he says, "We are come as far as to you also, in preaching the gospel of Christ; . . . having hope, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you."† Hence, also, the acknowledged (though too sadly neglected) duty of missionary labours in all ages, up to this very hour; seeing there are still many and populous nations undiscipled and unbaptized. The divine command is still unrepealed, still in full force, Go ye and make disciples of all nations. That this command was given to the first followers of the Lord Jesus; not as individuals who were all to be in their graves a few years after, and who, during those few years could not possibly go in person to all nations; but as representatives of a class of men which should never cease till the end of the world; appears strongly indicated, if not absolutely proved, by the promise which accompanied the command, "Lo! I am with you alway: go ye, make disciples, baptizing and teaching, as I have commanded you, and lo I am with you alway," *while you are so employed*, "even unto the end of the world."

This in some measure anticipates and answers the objections of those who admit that baptism as an outward ordinance was practised by the Apostles, but who deny, or at least hesitate to admit, that the practice was to be continued after the apostolic age. Such persons appear to think of baptism as they do

* Rom. xv. 20, 21. † 2 Cor. x. 14—16.

of the special and miraculous powers which were undeniably exercised in the infancy of the christian church, but afterwards ceased. It is difficult to reconcile this opinion with the fact already stated: that our Lord combines baptism with the teaching of all nations, and promises his presence with those who baptize and teach, even to the end of the world. In the parallel passage of the gospel narrative as recorded by St. Mark, our Lord makes baptism coextensive with faith unto salvation. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that *believeth* AND *is baptized* shall be saved." By this it would seem that baptism is to be practised as enduringly and as universally as faith is to be required.

It may indeed be urged, that in this very passage our Lord adds, "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues, or in new languages—γλωσσαις καιναῖς;—they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." * And it may be argued, and undoubtedly with much apparent force at first sight, that if these actual outward miracles have ceased as no longer essential in the christian church, why may we not conclude in like manner that baptism, as an outward visible ceremony, has ceased also, as no longer essential? This is no light objection. It is one which I strongly suspect many ad-

* St. Mark xvi. 17, 18.

vocates of the perpetuity of baptism have not duly considered. And therefore it should cause us all to entertain respect, unfeigned respect, for the scruples of the Society of Friends, which may, and I believe do, in a great measure, rest upon this very point. Socinians urge the same.

I will now endeavour to give what I conceive to be a fair answer to it. The objection rests upon the supposition that outward baptism and outward miracles held a similar position in the christian church during the apostolic age; that they were spoken of in similar language by our Lord; that they were both practised for a time, and that when the one ceased to be practised so should the other.

Upon further and closer examination, however, it will be found that there was an essential difference between the place occupied by baptism and that occupied by miracles, even among the Apostles themselves and their first converts. It will be found, also, that there is an essential difference between the mode in which our Lord speaks of baptism, and that in which he speaks of miracles; and the premises being thus removed, the cogency of the objection which rested mainly upon them, will be rendered, to say the least, less conclusive than it seemed before. I devoutly trust that in the calmness of unprejudiced reflection, it may wholly give way, in many sincere minds.

Even in the apostolic age, during the plenitude of supernatural power, outward miracles were per-

formed by but a few, a very few, of the members of the church; whereas outward baptism was administered to every member without exception. Many disciples were made without visible miracles: none without baptism. When men professed to believe, there is not one instance on record of any Apostle commanding them to work miracles: but it was the invariable practice of all the Apostles to command them to be baptized. This marks an essential difference between the two. Miracles were never considered coextensive with faith: baptism always was. Where faith was in any individual case, miracles might or might not be; but in every case baptism must be. Such is the aspect clearly presented by the facts of the case in apostolic times; and it establishes such a difference between miracles and baptism, as invalidates all reasoning grounded upon a supposed similarity between them.

To this agrees the difference in our Lord's language concerning them. He nowhere says, as of universal application in every individual case, he that believeth and worketh miracles shall be saved; as he does say, in a form of speech obviously intended to apply seriatim to each individual, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

The form of speech in which miracles are promised is of a totally different character. "These signs shall follow them that believe." He does not say, He that believeth, or, what is the same thing, each successive individual who believes, shall per-

form these signs; but only these signs shall follow the believing body, the believers, *them that believe.* Neither does he say how frequently these signs shall appear, nor by how many they shall be performed, nor for how long they shall continue. If outward miracles had accompanied the christian church only for one year, all that our Lord here promises would have been fulfilled. But if baptism do not continue to accompany the church, in the case of every individual that believeth, all that our Lord here enjoins is not complied with.

By this difference between miracles and baptism, and in our Lord's language concerning them respectively; we are prepared for the facts which have followed. The signs promised are all recorded to have taken place, with the exception of one; and it is very remarkable that the sign in question, the only one of which we read no instance in the history, is put hypothetically (and is the only one so put) in the promise. "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." We read no account of miraculous preservation after drinking poison. But all the other signs here mentioned are distinctly recorded as having occurred amongst the believers; and consequently at whatever season they may have ceased to occur, the Lord's promise was fully kept. They *did* cease to occur. This is a fact. It is equally a fact, that outward baptism never ceased. It was not till within comparatively late years, that, even in the smallest fractional sect of professing

Christians, outward baptism has been dispensed with or even questioned. The history of the church at large proclaims undeniably, what the language of scripture, carefully considered, prepares us to admit, nay, leads us to anticipate; namely, the cessation of miracles, and the continuance of baptism.

On these grounds I conclude concerning the proper subjects for baptism, first—that they are not to be confined to persons who lived during the apostolic age of outward miracles, but include all christian believers to the end of the world.

In this conclusion I am strengthened by the analogy with the Lord's Supper, which in its outward and visible administration is distinctly declared by the Apostle Paul to be for a remembrance of the Lord Jesus and a shewing forth of his death, "until his coming again."

But further, secondly, the proper subjects for baptism are not only all believers in all ages, but all who *profess* to be believers. The profession may be sincere or otherwise; the answer of the candidate, when questioned as to his faith in Christ, may be the answer of a good conscience, or it may not: but in either case, whatever may be the real state of heart of the individual; if the profession itself, in all that is outward to the eye and ear, be correct; baptism is to be administered. To this the Apostle Peter evidently refers when he distinguishes between the outward ordinance in itself, *(the putting away of the filth of the flesh,)* and the inward real character

of the recipient, *(the answer of a good conscience toward God,)** and limits the saving efficacy of baptism to the latter. Doubtless the servants of the Lord, in making disciples, should act with watchfulness and caution, and use every christian effort to guard against deception: but still, as the miraculous power of discerning the thoughts and intents of man's heart is not lodged in the church, we must form our judgment from what we *can* discern, and we are bound by holy scripture to administer baptism upon a fair outward profession.

This opens the door for false professors. Undoubtedly it does so; and that such was our Lord's intention is sufficiently plain from his own descriptions of the work of his ministers. They are sent to gather into one net, both good fishes and bad: to collect to one supper both welcome and unwelcome guests, who remain mingled in one company, till the King himself arrives, and then (but not before) the hypocrites are detected and excluded.

In the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch as a candidate for baptism, we have reason to believe, that the answer he gave Philip was not only correct in words, but also a genuine index of the state of his heart. In the case of Simon the sorcerer, we know the reverse. However fair his profession might have been, his heart was not right, he had no part or lot in the matter. Among the discipled Corinthians there were not only true believers renewed in heart and life,

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

but also false professors immoral in conduct, and heretical in doctrine: but all of them were baptized upon their profession of the faith; and in no case was either man or woman admitted to baptism, but upon his or her christian profession.

In dealing with men and women upon this point, we have the letter of the New Testament precedent to guide us; because the history of the Acts of the Apostles, is a history of christian missions among men and women. Under similar circumstances a similar course must ever be pursued. And such in point of fact has ever been the case. The records of christian missions exhibit various measures of wisdom and discretion, of watchfulness and caution, of prudence and discernment in the ministers of Christ, with reference to their treatment of candidates for baptism; but in one point they all agree, that neither man or woman is admitted to the ordinance but upon such a profession of the christian faith as appears at the time satisfactory to the minister; and that upon such a profession all are admitted, both good and bad. We have thus advanced another step, in determining who are the proper subjects for baptism.

Again, thirdly, The Apostle Paul, in describing the extension of the Gospel among the nations, uses these remarkable words, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith."* *The blessing of Abraham!*

* Gal. iii. 14.

Observe this is written in the New Testament, but how is it to be understood without referring to the Old? This is a question which we would earnestly press upon those who insist upon taking the New Testament by itself, and refuse to yield to any thing, but an explicit text of the New Testament. Here is a text of the New Testament, but in itself it explains nothing. It speaks of *the blessing of Abraham*, without telling us what that blessing was; and to those who will not be taught by the Old Testament, this text is no better than a hieroglyphic. Thus we are sent back (not by our own ingenuity to make out a case, as some affirm that we do, but) by the holy Apostle himself; we are sent back to the history of Abraham, to ascertain what his blessing was, that we may thereby know what it is, that is come to us Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

God had blessed Abraham, and that blessing; whatever it was, had for centuries been confined to one nation. Now, it was to be conveyed among all the nations. Let this point be duly considered. It was no new blessing that was now to be spread abroad among the nations; but the old blessing, the blessing of Abraham. The Gentiles were not to be brought into a relationship with God such as no people had ever been in before; but into a relationship such as Abraham and his people had been in for ages. Many of the outward circumstantials connected with that relationship might vary. They had varied, under Moses, from their original Abrahamic

aspect; and they were now to vary again after the death of Christ; but the relationship itself, and the blessing under which it was enjoyed, remained essentially the same. St. Paul does not use new language descriptive of a totally new religion, and containing in his own words a full explanation of his meaning. On the contrary, he uses old language, identifying the christian blessing with the blessing of Abraham, and compelling his readers either to refer to the book of Genesis for an enlarged explanation of his concise words, or to remain without any explanation at all. "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed *with* faithful Abraham."* Not by themselves, with some new and peculiar blessing; but with Abraham, being made *partakers* of the old blessing. "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."† "Now I say that Jesus Christ was *a minister of the circumcision*, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."‡ "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou (gentile) being a wild olive tree,

* Gal. iii. 7—9. † Ephes. iii. 6.

‡ Rom. xv. 8, 9.

wert graffed in among them, and *with* them *partakest* of the root and fatness of the olive tree."*

No unprejudiced inquirer, with such passages of the New Testament before him, can consent to dislocate the Old Testament from the New; or to prosecute any scriptural inquiry without free and full reference to any and every part of God's holy word.

Thus we are most deeply concerned in the blessing of Abraham; and thus a careful examination of the xvii. chapter of Genesis, where that blessing is most emphatically recorded, becomes a matter of the liveliest interest to every sincere Christian.

The covenanted blessing of God to Abraham was twofold, spiritual and temporal. Spiritual, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee:" and temporal, "I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan."† This latter part was obviously and necessarily, from the very nature of the blessing itself, to be confined to one nation. The land of Canaan was not to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Consequently the blessing of Abraham, which the Apostle says was to come, and did come on the Gentiles by the Gospel; was that blessing which assured him that God would be in a peculiar manner a God to him and his seed after him. Thus Abraham's children were included in *the blessing of Abraham.*

The outward ordinance of circumcision was com-

* Rom. xi. 17. † Gen. xvii. 7, 8.

manded of God as the visible token of the covenant established with Abraham: not of *a part* of the covenant only, but of the covenant. This appears on the face of the context—"I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee . . to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee, AND I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land . . . . Thou shall keep my covenant therefore . . . This is my covenant which ye shall keep . . . every man child among you shall be circumcised . . . . and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."

There is no ground therefore for the opinion entertained by some, that circumcision was the token of the promise of the land of Canaan *only*. It was *the token of the covenant*, which covenant included also the spiritual blessing. And although circumcision itself was, like the land, to be confined to one nation; yet being connected in its institution, with the spiritual blessing also, which was to come on the Gentile nations; it obviously originated the idea that the spiritual as well as the temporal blessing should have a visible token.

Circumcision was the token of both: and when the spiritual blessing came on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, some of the Jewish preachers of the Gospel, not seeing the distinction now before us, insisted on the Gentile converts being circumcised.* This arose from the connexion between circumcision and the spiritual blessing: for we hear of no attempt

* Acts xv. 1.

to put the Gentile converts into possession of the land of Canaan.

The infant children of circumcised parents could not have personally known, and felt, and believed, what their fathers knew, and felt, and believed: yet the same token of the covenant was given to them as to their fathers. God was their God, as truly as their fathers' God. They were treated as part and parcel of their parents; and the root being holy, so were the branches. The whole stock of the nation was separated from the world, and consecrated to God's peculiar service, (a kingdom of priests,) and every bud that opened its little bosom on the tree, was holy unto the Lord, by virtue of its connexion.

Such was the national custom in which the Apostles of Jesus, like all other Jews, had been brought up. Now, suppose Jesus had said to them, 'all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, *circumcising* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Is it not clear that the Apostles would have understood such a command as a command to circumcise, not only gentile adults, but the children of circumcised adults? Would they, as Jews, have required a specific mention of infants? Or rather, would not a specific prohibition respecting infants, have been required to prevent the Apostles from including them? This would be irresistible if the outward ordinance had not been changed. And now let us ask if it were the intention of Jesus to change the outward ordinance of discipleship with-

out changing the Jewish practice as to the admission of infants; what more simple course could have been adopted than to command Jews to go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them? They knew how their own nation had been made disciples, and in making disciples of other nations, they would naturally follow their own national pattern, unless they were forbidden, or supplied with some new pattern to follow. With regard to the thing to be done, they had a new pattern given them—baptism, was that thing. With regard to the persons to whom it was to be done, they had no new pattern, while they had the comprehensive description, *all nations*. If they followed the Jewish pattern, they would begin with adults and their families, as God did with Abraham, and they would continue with the children also of adult disciples, as God did with Abraham's children. This would be to extend *the blessing of Abraham* among the gentile nations.

Had the Lord and his Apostles left children out of the covenant, the Jews who took such care that their children should not be excluded from their own ordinance, would doubtless have urged this as a great objection to the christian religion.

But it is a fact, and an instructive fact, that among the many objections urged by the unbelieving Jews, we never hear of an objection on this account.

Was this principle of religious connexion between parent and child, to extend itself among the gentiles? The opponents of infant baptism, answer, no. They say Christianity is a personal affair throughout.

No one can be holy by proxy. No infant is capable of holiness. What saith the Apostle Paul? "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they *holy*." (1 Cor. vii. 14.) Thus the inspired Apostle calls those children *holy* of whom even one parent was a Christian. Had both the parents been heathens, the children would have been *unclean*. The origin of the scriptural distinction between clean and unclean, was the division of animals into such as might be offered in sacrifice unto God, and such as might not. The former were called *clean* or holy, the latter *unclean*. Hence the application to persons. The Jewish nation was a clean or holy nation, being consecrated to God as a living sacrifice. The heathen nations were *unclean*, being not so consecrated. The children of heathen parents were like themselves, unclean, unconsecrated. The children of christian parents, or even of one christian parent, were *holy* or consecrated.

To this, let me add the evidence of a fact. In the year 257, a council of sixty-six bishops of the christian church was convened at Carthage, concerning which, Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, says, that "having the question referred to them, whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old; they decided unanimously, that no infant is to be prohibited from the benefit of baptism."*

* Qualis illa de baptismo infantulorum controversia fuerit, ex epistolâ Cypriani ad Fidum presbyterum hic subjectâ, cognoscere licet.

Observe, this is no *opinion* of a fallible uninspired man, nor of a council. Whether the council determined right or wrong, is nothing to the purpose. The historical record of such a question having been

"Cyprianus, et ceteri collegæ qui in concilio ad fuerant, numero sexaginta sex, Fido fratri salutem."

The commencement of the letter is upon another subject. It then proceeds—"quantum vero ad causam infantium pertinet quos dixisti intra secundum vel tertium diem quo nati sunt, constitutos baptizari non oportere; et considerandam esse legem circumcisionis antiquæ, ut intra octavum diem eum qui natus est baptizandum et sacrificandum non putares: *longe aliud in concilio nostro omnibus visum est*. In hoc enim quod tu putabas esse faciendum nemo consensit, sed universi potius judicavimus nulli hominum nato miserecordiam Dei, et gratiam denegandum."

Then after some arguments in support of this, the unanimous decision of the Council; he thus meets the special objection which Fidus had urged, from the analogy with circumcision.

"Nam quod in Judaicâ circumcisione carnali octavus dies observabatur; sacramentum est in umbra atque in imagine ante præmissum; sed veniente Christo veritate completum. Nam quia octavus dies, id est, post sabbatum primus dies futurus erat, quo dominus resurgeret, et nos vivificaret, et circumcisionem nobis spiritalem daret: hic dies octavus, id est, post sabbatum primus et dominicus, præcessit in imagine, quæ imago cessavit superveniente post modum veritate, et data nobis spiritali circumcisione. Propter quod neminem putamus â gratiâ consequenda impediendum esse eâ lege quæ jam statuta est, nec spiritalem circumcisionem impediri carnali circumcisione debere, sed omnem omnino hominem admittendum esse ad gratiam Christi; quando et Petrus in Actibus Apostolorum loquatur et dicat: "Dominus mihi dixit neminem communem dicendum et immundum."

Ceterum si homines impedire aliquid ad consecutionem gratiæ posset; magis adultos, et provectos, et majores natu possent im-

examined establishes this fact; that infant baptism, at or after eight days old, was then the custom of the church. And this is a very important fact, because it turns the silence of other primitive christian writers upon the subject, into proofs of our position. The fact before us, proves the practice; and their silence proves their acquiescence in, and approbation of, the practice. It is just a case wherein silence proves consent.

Upon the supposition here advocated of the Jewish pattern having been followed, and the Jewish practice adopted; the period of the first introduction of infant baptism into the church, would not and could not be determined and specified; because it must

pedire peccata graviora. Porro autem si etiam gravissimis delictoribus, et in Deum multum ante peccantibus *cum postea crediderint,* remissa peccatorum datur; et â baptismo atque â gratia nemo prohibetur; quanto magis prohiberi non debet infans, qui recens natus nihil peccavit, nisi quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mortis antiquæ prima nativitate contraxit? qui ad remissam peccatorum accipiendam hoc ipso facilius accedit, quod illi remittuntur non propria sed aliena peccata. Et idcirco, frater carissime, hæc fuit in concilio nostra sententia, â baptismo atque â gratia Dei, qui omnibus miserecors et benignus et pius est, neminem per nos debere prohiberi. Quod cum circa universos observandum sit, atque retinendum, tum magis circa infantes ipsos et recens natos observandum putamus; qui hoc ipso de ope nostrâ, ac de divinâ miserecordiâ plus merentur, quod in primo statim nativitatis suæ ortu plorantes ac flentes nihil aliud faciunt quam deprecantur. Optamus te, frater carissime, semper bene valere."

Mansi. Sacr. Conci. Coll. Tom. i. p. 899.
(Edit. Florence 1759.)

have taken place gradually as children were born to parents who had themselves been baptized as adults. In this case, we would not be likely to have any distinct record about the matter until some occasion of discussion arose; and then the terms of the discussion would take for granted the existence of the practice, and not treat it as any thing requiring apology or defence. And such exactly is the state of the case, corroborating, in the most unsuspicious manner, the correctness of our supposition, and the conclusiveness of our argument.

Saint Paul treats the subject of circumcision in immediate connexion with the person of Christ; stating, first a fact, and then two consequences resulting from that fact. He says that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God;" and then he adds the twofold end attained by this, "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." *

The child Jesus was circumcised as a matter of course. This followed from his birth in the Jewish church, made of a Jewish woman, made under the Jewish law.† This ordinance of the law was administered in what he himself afterwards called the fulfilment of all righteousness. He thus became "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God."

This is the fact; and it speaks clearly, we may ob-

* Rom. xv. 8, 9.

† St. Luke ii. 21. Gal. iv. 4.

serve, the high and fundamental truth of substitution. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, and full of very expressive meaning as applied to sinful man, who is born in corruption, and grows up a slave to the lusts of his flesh. But where was the meaning of applying it to a person who was altogether free from sin, holy, harmless, undefiled? The answer is, he was from the first "made sin for us." The discipline, pain, chastisement, blood-shedding, or by whatever other name or names it may be called, which was most righteously deserved by our iniquities, was laid on him. Nothing of the kind was deserved by him, yet everything of the kind was inflicted upon him.

The consequences of his circumcision, as here stated by the Apostle, were,

(1.) To confirm the promises made to the Jewish fathers.

The promises referred to are those, of course, which are written in the Old Testament, and the place therein where we first find them in connexion with circumcision, is the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. In that chapter, there are, as we have already noticed, two distinct heads of promise; the one referring to the multitude of Abraham's offspring in Christ: the other, to the possession of the land of Canaan. These are included in one covenant, and the token of the covenant was circumcision. The first of these was a repetition of what had been already promised to him, and what he had already

believed: (chap. xv.) This is proved to have been the gospel. (Gal. iii. 8.) The great blessing of the gospel was bestowed upon Abraham while he was uncircumcised. That blessing is gracious reconciliation to, and fellowship with God, through faith in God's word, whether it be a word of prophecy, or a word of history. The work of Jesus Christ in our nature was, in the days of Abraham, a word of prophecy: Abraham believed it, in the sense of relying upon it, saw the day of Christ afar off, and was glad, having peace with God. The work of Jesus Christ in our nature, is now a word of history, and all who believe it in like manner, that is, in the sense of relying on it, enter into the same peace.*

The permanent, peaceful, and holy possession of the land of Canaan by the Jewish nation was then a word of prophecy. Abraham believed it, giving glory to God. Whatever partial fulfilment it may have had, or, to speak more correctly, whatever earnest of its fulfilment may have been given, under David, or Solomon, or Hezekiah; it is, in its true import, a word of prophecy still, and to believe it, without a question, is to give glory to the divine veracity.

This explains the religion of Abraham, during several years previous to the institution of circumcision. The promises of God were made to him. He believed them, and, through confidence of heart in God's word, the blessing promised was reckoned

* St. John viii. 56; Rom. iv. 20—25.

to him as possessed. The seat of his religion was his heart; and as yet there was no corresponding or significant symbol of it in his flesh; no outward ratification of it to his sight. The permanence of such a state of things is quite conceivable, and spiritual minds may imagine its sufficiency also, for all the purposes of true religion. But we have now to do, not with imaginations, but with facts.

Instead of leaving matters so, it pleased God, previous to the death of Abraham, to establish an outward and visible ordinance, as *a sign*, and as *a seal*. Thus the Apostle writes. Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." * As circumcision was significant of the change of character produced in Abraham, it was a sign. It was a sign of the cutting off of the sins of the flesh. He had the thing signified in its spiritual influence before he had the sign of it, and the sign was added for his instruction. It was not only a sign of his profession as a Jew distinguishing him, and to distinguish his seed, from the uncircumcised nations of mankind—this was indeed a further purpose intended by it—but it was a sign of the change in his character which had been already effected by faith in God's word.

So far, considered as a sign, the thing seems plain enough. But how was it *a seal?* A seal authenticates an agreement already made; and in point of

* Rom. iv. 11.

fact, the agreement must be made and mutually consented to by both parties, before it is in a condition to be sealed. Circumcision, appointed by God for a sign, and visibly authenticating his promise to all who had the thing signified, became *to them* a seal—a seal of the righteousness of the faith which they had before they received the sign. Thus circumcision was a sign of man's changed character, and a seal of God's gracious promise. It did not change the character, but was a sign of the change. It did not entitle to the promise, but to every one already changed and receiving the sign, it did actually and visibly seal the promise.

This is simple in the case of Abraham, and of all who have the thing signified, before they receive the sign.* All such persons believe the promises of God, and are personally interested; i. e. the agreement is mutually consented to—before they receive the seal. In such cases, the sign is received, a seal of the blessing enjoyed, while as yet there was no sign. But this simplicity *seems* to be destroyed; the natural and beautiful order reversed; and the whole

* What then was circumcision to the men of *Shechem*, who received it, not in consequence of any spiritual change of character, but entirely at the instance of their young prince *Hamor*, himself induced by mere human affection? It was a sign of a change of character which they did *not* possess; and to them it was a seal of nothing, because there was nothing to seal, no agreement between them and the God of Israel. (See Gen. xxxiv.)

affair thrown into unintelligible confusion; by giving this sign and seal to unconscious infants of a week old. I am free to confess that with the history of Abraham *alone* before me, and the commentary of St Paul upon it, I would not, *à priori*, have anticipated the circumcision of infants. But here again we are met by facts. The history of Abraham does not stand alone. The fact that infants were circumcised, and by especial divine commandment, cannot be disputed; though the principle on which it was done may be mistaken. Perhaps that principle is not fully and clearly revealed, since God requires of us confidence in his wisdom; obedience of faith, as well as obedience of reason. I have already adverted to one ground of reason for this appointment, viz. the connexion between parent and child, so that the root—the believing parent—being holy, the branch also is holy. It is not to be expected that this will satisfy all minds. The fact, however, remains as God's own appointment; and that there is good and sufficient reason for it is to be believed, whether we can discern it to our own intelligent satisfaction or not.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by being circumcised as he was, gave all the weight of his authority and divine mission to the blessings and promises of the Old Testament; and also to the instituted sign of the blessing, and seal of the promise; and further, to the application of the sign and seal to an infant. Thus he "confirmed the promises made to the

fathers;" and as among these were included the gospel promise to all nations, so among the results from the circumcision of Christ, is included—

(2.) "That the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy." It thus appears, and the conclusion is very important, that circumcision was connected with the covenant of grace in the gospel, and not merely with the covenant of the land of Canaan. On these grounds we justify the analogy above stated, between the mode of discipling the Jewish nation, from Abraham till Christ; and the mode of discipling all nations then specially commanded by Christ himself.

Having thus considered the proper subjects for the ordinance of baptism, we proceed to examine,

V. *The nature of the efficacy*, which it is scriptural to ascribe to this ordinance.

The language of the Apostles upon this subject is mingled with allusions to another subject, which, for the sake of clearness, demands attention first, and distinctly. In speaking of the spiritual changes which a sinner undergoes in becoming truly a child of God, the Apostles largely refer to the history of the actual physical changes which the body of Christ underwent.

The body of Jesus was literally dead: and this is used as an image of the spiritual "death unto sin" which is experienced by the awakened soul.

The body of Jesus was literally buried; and this

is used as an image of the spiritual burial or separation from this present evil world, which is experienced by the penitent soul.

The body of Jesus was literally raised from the dead, and taken up to heaven; and this is used as an image of the spiritual resurrection and ascension to newness of life, which is experienced by the regenerated soul.

All this is sometimes spoken of without any reference to baptism. Thus, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, the spiritual quickening of souls previously dead in sin, and the resurrection of Christ's body, are ascribed to the same almighty energy . . . . "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised *him* from the dead . . . . and *you* who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . . and hath raised us up together."* Also, in his Epistle to the Colossians, the holiness of the Christian, in heart and life, is represented as the consequence of his spiritual resurrection, in union with Christ, whose resurrection was literal. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, (to sin,) and your (new spiritual) life is hid with Christ in God. *Mortify, therefore,* your members which are upon the earth."†

* Eph. i. 19; ii. 1—6. † Col. iii. 1—4.

St. Peter also connects the renewal of the Christian to a lively hope, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

In other passages, however, this language, derived from the history of the body of Jesus, is mingled with mention of, and allusions to, baptism; all expressive of the same spiritual meaning. This will assist us to understand aright that remarkable passage in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "How shall we, that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with him* by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory (the glorious power) of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

We are dead to sin in our hearts, as Jesus was dead to this world in his body. This is the reason we cannot continue to live in sin. But how are we dead to sin? Know ye not, that so many of us as have been converted to God, or—to express the same thing, not literally, but in a figure derived from that ordinance in which we have professed and proclaimed our conversion—so many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death, or—to express the same thing literally—were converted into a state of deadness to sin. Therefore, also, as Christ's body was literally buried and

* 1 Pet. i. 3.

separated from the visible things of this world, so we are spiritually separated, or—to say the same thing in a figure derived from his body—we are buried with him; or—to say the same thing in a double figure, derived from his body and our ordinance—we are buried by baptism into death, in order that as Christ was literally raised from the dead, and manifestly taken up to heaven by the glory of the Father, so we should be spiritually raised to heavenly things and thoughts, and manifest the same by walking in newness of life.

Similar to this is the meaning of the Apostle's language to the converted Colossians. "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"—the faith which is wrought in you by the power of God, the same power by which Jesus Christ was raised from the dead—"And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."*

The Colossians were never circumcised in the flesh. That would have been circumcision made *with* hands. But they were quickened to God by the "circumcision of Christ," or christian circumcision, or circumcision made without hands. Here

* Col. ii. 11—13.

their spiritual change is expressed in a figure derived from the Jewish ordinance; and then the Apostle proceeds to explain his own meaning—establishing, by the way, a tolerably strong analogy between circumcision and baptism—"Buried with him in baptism," i. e. spiritually dead and separated from this world in your baptism, as Christ was literally dead and buried; "wherein also ye are risen with him," spiritually risen to a new state of life in your baptism, as Christ was literally raised from the dead; "through the faith of the operation of God." In the passage just cited from the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle says that Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and here he ascribes the spiritual resurrection of the Colossian Christians to the faith of the operation of God. In like manner he says to the converted Galatians, "Ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ have put on Christ."*

In all this the Apostle speaks of baptism as a compound, including two things, the outward visible ordinance, and the inward spiritual faith. As such he identifies baptism with conversion, so completely that the word conversion, in its full spiritual meaning, might be substituted for the word baptism, without altering the sense of the context. Buried with him in conversion, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith which is of the operation

* Gal. iii. 26, 27.

of God. Know ye not that so many of us as were converted to Jesus Christ, were converted to his death—to a state of deadness to sin imaged by his literal death—therefore we are buried, separated from the world, with him, by conversion to his death —deadness to sin—that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glorious power of the Father operating in the sepulchre, even so we also, being converted through the faith, which is of the same glorious power of God, operating in our hearts, should walk in newness of life.

The faith was the inward and invisible principle produced by the power of God; the water was the outward and visible element used by the command of God. By the faith the spiritual change was effected in the sight of God; by the water it was authenticated and ratified—wherever it existed—in the sight of men. And the Apostle habitually uses the word baptism to express—not merely and singly the outward ordinance in water, but—unitedly the outward ordinance, and the inward and true faith. Meaning this, all this, by baptism, he ascribes to it saving efficacy, as we do to conversion. This is that "one baptism" which we acknowledge for the remission of sins.*

But what if, in any instance, only *a part* of what the Apostles mean by baptism be given? What, for example, if only the outward ordinance be given? Then, in that case, *baptism* is not given; baptism,

* Nicene Creed.

as the Apostles understood it, is not "rightly received," * and there is no saving efficacy. This distinction is clearly marked by St. Peter, when, speaking of the saving efficacy of baptism, he guards carefully against the possibility of being mistaken to mean the outward ordinance only.

Comparing baptism to the ark of Noah, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the water which sustained the ark; he says that in the ark a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; and then he adds, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us," but instead of simply concluding with "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," he says, "baptism doth also now save us—not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God—by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." †

Baptism doth save: but what baptism? The answer is, baptism "rightly received;" that is, not a part of it only, not the application of water to the flesh, but the whole of it, including also the state of heart which supplies an answer of a good conscience, a true and faithful answer to the question, Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ?

If thou believest thou mayest be baptized with water.

I believe.

Well, if this be the answer of a good conscience; if the faith of the operation of God be indeed in

* Art. xxvii. † 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

you, effecting a spiritual change; then the outward part of the ordinance, which is a sign of that change, will be to you a seal of all its blessings. Such baptism doth save.

It was possible then—why else should St. Peter introduce such a clause?—that the component parts of what the Apostles meant by saving baptism, might in some instances be separated: that the outward ordinance in water might be administered without an answer of a good conscience, without any accompanying inward faith, and consequently without any real spiritual change.

This was indeed indispensable towards the accomplishment of the Lord's revealed purpose, that his true church should continue a hidden company, known certainly only to himself; that the tares and the wheat, the clothed and the unclothed guests, the sheep and the goats, should be so mingled, as to render it impossible for his most faithful servants infallibly to distinguish; because, to this end, every *outward* mark possessed by the children of God must be possessed by them in common with others.

At the commencement, however, in the infancy of the church, during the personal ministry of the Apostles, we may well believe that the separation, the outward ordinance, without the answer of a good conscience, was comparatively very rare. There had as yet been no time for a generation of nominal Christians to grow up. All who were called Christians, or nearly all, were adult converts from Judaism

or paganism, baptized in consequence of their own profession of the christian faith; and in those days, when the christian church had no temporal honors, distinctions, or emoluments, to confer on her members, but, on the contrary, when a profession of Christianity exposed men to odium, and obloquy, and persecution, the temptations to a false or hypocritical profession were comparatively few. It is true that even then there were some hypocrites, but their number must have been small. They were the exceptions, and therefore—although when speaking prophetically the Apostles make the mixed character of the baptized body sufficiently distinct, yet when speaking of the state of things actually existing in their own days—it was natural enough to address to professing Christians generally, i. e. to the then visible church, language which in strict literal accuracy was applicable only to real christian believers.

Such language commonly used, plainly involves the supposition, that commonly baptism was complete, that it was *a sign* of a change of character, of a spiritual cleansing already received; and, to persons so changed, *a seal* of God's promises to his people. In the case of an adult convert, such as Saul of Tarsus, or Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart was already changed by the Holy Spirit, this was simple and clear, harmonizing exactly with the case of Abraham. Such converts were already personally interested in God's promises. Baptism, appointed by the Lord Jesus for a sign,

and visibly authenticating his promises to all who had the thing signified, became to them a seal, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which they had before they were baptized. Baptism was a sign, not merely of their profession of the christian religion, but also of their inward and spiritual change of character; and a seal of God's gracious promises to them. It did not change their characters; they were not admissible to it till they had, or said they had, faith, and faith changes the character, overcoming the world; but it was a sign of the change. It did not entitle to the promises, but to every one already spiritually changed, and thereby entitled, it did actually and visibly seal the promises. And therefore, although baptism was not precisely contemporaneous in God's sight, with the spiritual change; yet following soon after according to God's commandment, and being the first manifestation of it to man's sight; the whole change came naturally to be identified with, and expressed by the outward and visible sign and seal of it. Forgiveness of sins accompanied the spiritual change, and therefore is sometimes spoken of as accompanying the sign of the change.

Forgiveness is much more frequently spoken of in direct connexion with the faith of the heart, and without any reference to the ordinance of baptism. "Him (Christ) hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."* "Be

* Acts v. 31.

it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe, are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."* "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."† "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."‡

In these and such passages, the blessing of forgiveness of sins, is associated with that state of heart which is by the faith of the operation of God; and of which only God himself is immediately and directly cognizant.

There is one passage of a different character, where forgiveness is associated with that outward ordinance of God's appointment, which is an avowal among men, that he who observes it is the Lord's servant. With the heart he has believed unto righteousness; and now, using water according to the commandment, and "calling upon the name of the Lord," he makes confession with his mouth unto salvation.§ The passage referred to, the only one of the kind in the sacred volume, occurs in the address of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, as recorded in the xxii. chapter of the Acts. "The God of our fathers

* Acts xiii. 38, 39.
† Ibid. xxvi. 18.
‡ Col. i. 14.
§ Rom. x. 10.

hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and *be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*"

Saul was already a believer in the Lord Jesus, whose glory he had seen and whose voice he had heard. Being a believer, he had as such the blessing of forgiveness of sins: yet here the washing away of his sins is connected with the outward ordinance, which was the open profession of faith, and which there appears to have been some disposition in him to delay; for Ananias said, "Why tarriest thou?" As if he had said, show yourself what you are, at once; the God of our fathers has chosen you for his servant; avow yourself as such, to the encouragement of your fellow servants, and to the confusion of surrounding adversaries. Saul did so. He committed himself; "and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the son of God. . . . All that heard him were amazed. . . . But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."*

In the case of Abraham, as we have seen, the institution of an outward ordinance was delayed for many years after the servant of God was in the

* Acts ix. 20—22.

possession and enjoyment of spiritual religion. In the case of Saul, there was no delay; but the principle was the same. Saul was a believer as Abraham had been, the seat of his religion was his heart, and he received a significant symbol of it in his flesh, an outward ratification of it to his sight. He received the sign of baptism, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being unbaptized. It was a sign of the washing away of his sins. It was not only a sign of his profession as a Christian, distinguishing him from his unbaptized fellow countrymen; but it was a sign of the change in his state and character, which had been already effected by faith.

It is not, I think, to be wondered at that some men, captivated with the beauty of this arrangement, should endeavour to retain it unimpaired by confining baptism to adults, and as far as possible to converted adults. It is right so to do in the commencement of a mission to the heathen—the only true parallel to the history of the Acts of the Apostles; yet even here, there will occur cases to which the apostolical language concerning baptism cannot be truly applied. It could not have been truly applied in the case of Simon Magus, yet, it is instructive to observe, that, notwithstanding this and other such disastrous instances as those of Ananias and Sapphira, Demas, Diotrephes, Hymeneus, Philetus, the language habitually used by the Apostles concerning baptism, ascribes to it the efficacy, which

in genuine instances of real converts, of truth belonged to it.

What then if a christian community adopt this view; confine the ordinance to adults, not only in the outset of a mission, but always; endeavour to confine it to really and spiritually converted adults, i. e. true believers, who when questioned can give an answer of a good conscience; and notwithstanding occasional or even frequent disappointments, continue to speak of it as what it *ought* to be: are such persons to be unchristianized, or are they to be denied the name of a christian church, because they cannot enter into our analogy between baptism and circumcision, and thereupon feel constrained to deny that there exists any divine authority for the baptism of infants? I trust not: although I firmly believe, that "the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as *most agreeable* with the institution of Christ." A diversity of judgment upon this point, followed by a corresponding diversity of practice, although it must of course involve error on one side; need not, and I hope does not, involve such error as of necessity vitiates the saving Christianity of either side.

It can be no matter of surprise, that some men, admiring as cordially as their opponents in this question do, the beauty and simplicity of the scriptural arrangement and language concerning the baptism of believing adults; but seeing that the analogy of God's dealings, and the practice of Christ's church

conspire in the conclusion that baptism was from the first given to infants, should retain the practice; and that retaining it, they should not on that account cease to speak of baptism as the scripture speaks, but endeavour to ascribe, to every instance of every infant, the perfectness which belonged to a perfect instance of a truly converted adult, receiving the sign of baptism, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet unbaptized.

Are such persons to be condemned as superstitious formalists, or denied the name and character of a true christian church; because, allowing their affections to be engaged in this matter as well as their understandings, and availing themselves of the degree of obscurity which it has pleased God to leave around the subject; they continue, in the face of many disappointments, to speak of baptism as what it *ought* to be, conceiving that they are thereby honouring God's appointment as such, and as far as lieth in them, inviting and encouraging among men that simple confidence of heart which is the special element of saving efficacy? Μη γενοιτο.

This is the tender, affectionate, loving, and confiding position taken by the English church. Here, she exhorts her members not to doubt, but earnestly to believe that Almighty God *favourably alloweth* her charitable work in bringing her infants to his holy baptism: here, not in the language of dogmatic theology, but of fervent devotion, she urges her petitions before the throne of grace, pleading the pro-

mise made to prayer by Him who said, Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Here, she responds with earnestness and animation, "Lord, give now to us that ask, let us that seek find, open the door to us that knock," "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant that he may be born again and made an heir of everlasting salvation." And here, with humble but hearty confidence in the divine assurance that "whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive,"* she pours forth her thanksgivings to her heavenly Father for his tender mercy, because it hath pleased him to hear and answer her prayers, because it hath pleased him to regenerate her infants with his Holy Spirit, to receive them for his own children by adoption, and to incorporate them into his holy church.†

If, however, any of her members, not content with this, proceed to systematize, if they advance the theory that every baptized person is absolutely *opere operato* delivered from original sin; then they place themselves in opposition to the English church; because, in her dogmatic theology, that church plainly declares that original sin, "this infection of our nature, which deserves God's wrath and damnation, *doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.*"‡ So that even if it could be most rigidly proved, that

* St. Matt. xxi. 22. † Baptismal office.

‡ Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring

every baptized person is regenerated; still, according to the deliberate decision of the English church, it would not follow that any baptized person was delivered from original sin. Deliverance from sin, both original and actual, is ascribed exclusively to the "one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross."*

And if others, equally determined to systematize, assert that the regeneration spoken of in the service, is not spiritual regeneration, but only ecclesiastical; not a renewal of the heart in the sight of God, but only a change of state as to outward privilege and consequent responsibility; not an introduction to pardoning mercy and saving grace, but only to geographical

of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin. Art. ix.

* The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits. Art. xxxi.

Christianity; they also appear to forsake the well-balanced teaching of the Church of England; because, first, in this service she prays that the adult candidate for baptism, or the infant charitably brought," may receive remission of his sins by "*spiritual* regeneration;" not ecclesiastical, but *spiritual* regeneration! she prays also, that "he may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning;" which, on the supposition of his receiving then, certainly and always, geographical Christianity, and certainly nothing more; would be a prayer that he might continue a geographical Christian only, never becoming a spiritual one, during the rest of his life. And because, secondly, the Church of England, in her dogmatic teaching, expressly declares that they who receive baptism *rightly* are thereby grafted into the church; that the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are therein visibly signed and sealed; that faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God.*

* "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference whereby christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth," —not regeneration itself, but *a sign* of regeneration,—"whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly,"—not *all* who receive it, but *they* who receive it *rightly*,—"are grafted into the church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed. Faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Art. xxvii.

By virtue of prayer to God! These words indicate a part at least, and a most important part, of what is intended by receiving baptism *rightly*. They ascribe the saving benefit to the virtue of prayer, and thus supply a key to the right understanding of the baptismal office. May every reader of these pages be mercifully enabled to realize the full benefit of his baptism, by virtue of prayer to God; looking back upon that sacred ordinance, administered in compliance with the Lord's commandment, as a seal of God's promises of mercy to his soul, as manifestly applied as if a visible hand had been stretched down from heaven for the purpose! And if any one ask himself in some perplexity, "How can I look upon baptism as a seal of God's promises to me, seeing it is equally applied to thousands, who entirely disregard those promises?" Let him answer to himself another question, "How is it that I receive the bible as God's word to me, seeing it is equally sent, and freely distributed among thousands of unbelievers? What makes the difference?"

Confidence of heart in it makes all the difference. So it does in baptism. This is God's gift: "doubt ye not, but earnestly believe; ask, seek, knock; God has promised to answer prayer. Wherefore we, being thus persuaded, and nothing doubting, let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks," &c.

Viewed thus, as a service of warm-hearted devotion, our baptismal office is full of elevating confidence in God, and animating encouragement to

christian parents; and the only embarrassment we feel in the use of it, is one common to all christian forms of devotion composed in faith, and hope, and love; namely, that our hearts are rarely so full of faith and hope and love, as cordially to keep pace with our words of prayer and praise, especially praise. From this embarrassment we can have no relief, but in one of two ways; either by lowering the form to the unchristian state of our own hearts, or by raising our hearts to the christian character of the form. It is a christian thing to pray in faith and hope and love, asking the Holy Ghost for our children. It is a christian thing to give thanks in faith and hope and love, though for the present we seem not to receive what we ask for. It is an unchristian thing to cease to pray for the blessing. It is an unchristian thing to pray without faith. It is an unchristian thing to pray with faith, and not to give thanks for having our prayer heard. *Sursum corda.* "The virtue of prayer" is the holy oil which makes our baptismal service run sweetly, without either dogmatizing in falsehood on the physical efficacy of the ordinance in itself, or recoiling in unbelief from the christian fervour of the language employed in it.

But if our baptismal service, instead of being thus treated as a form of devotional earnestness, be looked upon as expressing a decision in dogmatic theology; and, as such, be compared with Holy Scripture, the statements in the xxv. and xxvii. Articles, and the

facts of the case; it must continue what it has long been, a fruitful source of debate and division. The controversy can never be closed.

Wise and practical men, in the exercise of high and responsible authority, should look to this. If it be in their power to remove, or even in some good measure to abate, existing divisions; it is no light matter to keep such a candle under a bushel. If they be hindered from any united movement by divisions among themselves, those are the divisions which they should seriously lay to heart; and they should bear in mind, that while the commandments to seek the good of others unto edification, to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and to remove stumbling-blocks out of the way, are given by inspiration of God; the *ipsissima verba* of our church service, however excellent, are not given by inspiration of God.

By a slight alteration, very slight, more verbal than real, the cause of truth would lose nothing, and the cause of the Church of England would gain much, by enabling her attached ministers and members to show, with more simplicity, and with less need for laborious explanations—which wear to many the appearance of evasion—the harmony of her various official documents among themselves, and with the undeniable facts of the case by which she is surrounded.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST MILITANT HERE ON EARTH. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Figurative language—Force of words—Exposition of St. John vi. *—Christ's disciples prepared for such language as "Take, eat, this is my body"—Institution of the Lord's Supper—An abiding ordinance "till the Lord come"—What is essential to its scriptural celebration—The true essential nature of it—A commemoration of an absent friend—A confession of faith—A vow of devoted service, sacramentum—A feeding upon the truth—The body and blood of Christ expressive of all revealed truth—This may be eaten without the supper, and the supper without this—Proportion of Apostolical teaching on these points—Our absent Lord is coming.*

"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." God, who in all his former communications treated man in a way suited to his complex nature, consisting of soul and body, has in this, his last communication, treated us in like manner; addressing truth, spiritual truth, to the conceptions and feelings of the soul, and exhibiting that truth in the

elements of the outward and visible world, to the senses of the body. We have seen the application of this, as it regards baptism; and we are now to consider it in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

1. During the personal ministry of Jesus on the earth, he expressed many of the sublime truths of his spiritual religion in figurative language. All Scripture, indeed, abounds with figures of speech; and for the right understanding of Scripture, it is absolutely indispensable that careful attention be paid to the nature of such language, and the source from whence it is derived. The nature of it is simply this; the expression of an inward invisible truth by an outward and visible object; the force of which expression is derived from the harmony which, as a matter of fact, is found to exist between outward objects and inward truths, and the consequent suitability of the one to represent the other. For example, I wish to express this precious truth, that the invisible God is aware of all my necessities and infirmities, and in kind watchful care and tender love, is constantly supplying all my wants. To say this briefly, comprehensively, expressively, I say "*God is my shepherd.*" Here is an outward and visible object made use of to express my meaning. This is a figure. The office of a shepherd towards his sheep, his knowledge of their habits, and his watchful care of them, going out and coming in, supplying them with pasture convenient for them; these constitute the suitability which renders the

figure expressive. In the letter of it, the letter is a falsehood. "The letter killeth." As a figure it is a life-giving truth.

The sources from whence such figures are derived are various. The most fertile are the natural creation, and the instituted types of the Jewish ceremonial law. When St. John says, "*God is light*,"* he takes a figure from the natural creation. When St. Paul calls "*Christ our passover*," † he takes a figure from the law of Moses. Concerning the ceremonial law of the Jews, we read that it was arranged for the express purpose of setting forth the everlasting truths of the Gospel, for "look," said God, "that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown thee in the Mount." ‡ The great original of that pattern was the everlasting Gospel, which Jehovah purposed in Jesus to his own glory.

The suitability, therefore, of the figures derived from the Mosaic types to express the spiritual things of Christ is not accidental, but designed of God. The same is true concerning the objects of external nature. Creation as well as Judæism was designed to bear witness to the truth, the eternal truth, which God purposed in his dear Son to his own glory. Hence everything is what it is. Hence the properties of every external object. Everything was "made by Christ, and for Christ." § Hence the analogies between external nature, and revealed

* 1 John i. 5.
† 1 Cor. v. 7.
‡ Exod. xxv. 40.
§ Col. i. 16.

religion, which Bishop Butler and others have pointed out with so much sagacity and power, to prove that the author of nature is also the author of Scripture. Hence, also, the important fact in the interpretation of Scripture, that the external world in all its varieties; matter with all its properties, and combinations of properties; supply a vocabulary of figurative language, to express the truth of God as it is in Jesus Christ, and in the church of Christ. The figurative language so used is popular, not scientific; and therefore the properties of matter referred to in it are such as are generally and practically known, not such as require the application of chemistry to elicit. The new creation of the church of God out of the darkness of sin, is thus expressed in language derived from the creation of order, and light, and beauty, out of the darkness of chaos." "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

(2.) Words are useful. This is a truism; but let it be considered how and why words are useful. They are not so in themselves as mere sounds. Were I to utter Greek or Hebrew words in a pulpit in this country, surrounded by an attentive congregation, the sounds might be in themselves most distinct and clear, and audible by all, and yet in nowise useful; because they would be *mere sounds;* words are useful, then, not merely as sounds, but as

conveyers of a meaning. I stand in a pulpit and look round upon a congregation. I have a thought in my mind which I wish to convey into their minds. How shall I do it? I am acquainted with certain sounds which will express my meaning, and I know the fact that the people also are acquainted with the same sounds. They are English words. I speak them, and in an instant, as if by electric wires, I convey into all their minds the thought that was in my own mind. If, however, I used those words or any of them, in a sense different from that in which the auditors understood them; then, instead of conveying the thought of my mind into their minds, I would convey some other thought which might be of a totally different character. Thus, in order to be useful, words must not only be in the same language which the auditors of them understand, but they must be used in the same sense, which those auditors habitually ascribe to them. If the language be not known, words are absolutely useless? If the language be known, but the sense in which the speaker uses it be not known, words are deceitful and mischievous; so that, finally, it is only when both the language and the sense in which the speaker uses it, are known, that words are useful.

I shall now apply these remarks to one of the most striking and instructive dissertations recorded in the New Testament. Jesus said to his disciples and a surrounding multitude of Jews, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father,

so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (St. John vi. 57.) Here our attention is directed to the nature of true religion as enjoyed by a living member of Christ's church in this world. The expression eating is the peculiar one in this passage. It was introduced into the conversation by the Jews in their cavils against Jesus. (verses 30, 31.) They had followed him because of the miracle of the loaves. Here they insinuate that if he grounded his claims to be received as the Messiah upon miracles, they ought to be of a more extensive kind. His having fed about five thousand men with a few loaves was nothing, when compared with what Moses did, who, they said, fed the whole congregation of Israel without any loaves, with manna brought down from heaven. Jesus, as his manner was,* avails himself of the incident before him to proclaim essential eternal truth: he takes, as it were, his text from their allusion to the manna in the wilderness, and preaches the gospel in language borrowed from the wants and the supplies of the body. "Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

* Compare his discourse with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, (St. John iv.,) where water was the present visible figure, suggestive of spiritual truth. The resemblance between that discourse and the one now under consideration, is remarkable. In truth the one is little else than a repetition of the other, by simply substituting the words "water" and "thirst," for the words "bread" and "hunger."

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." (verses 32, 33.) Not perceiving the spiritual turn he was giving the subject, they asked him for a continual supply. "Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread." (verse 34.) He answered them more plainly, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (verse 35.) Here we learn to identify three modes of expression: *eating him, coming to him, and believing on him.* That which naturally puts an end to hunger is *eating;* but Jesus says, He that *cometh* to me shall never hunger, therefore coming and eating mean the same thing. That which naturally puts an end to thirst is *drinking;* but Jesus says, He that *believeth* on me shall never thirst, therefore believing and drinking mean the same thing. Whichever of these expressions he afterwards uses throughout the discourse, still one and the same thing is intended—inward, living, spiritual, satisfying, strengthening communion with him! See what light this throws upon the whole strain of what follows—*Ye also have seen me and believe not.* Ye do not come to me, ye do not eat me. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me,* shall believe in me, shall eat me, *and him that cometh,* that believeth, that eateth, *I will in nowise cast out.*

This explains the remarkable parallel in the words already quoted. As the living Father hath sent me,

and *I live by the Father* in a spiritual satisfying, strengthening communion with the Father, finding it my meat and drink to do the will of my Father; so he that eateth me as the bread, cometh to me as the way, believeth on me as the truth, *even he shall live by me.* What, then, is this eating of Christ and living by Christ which is the privilege of every believer? We answer by asking another question. What was the living by the Father which was the happy privilege of Jesus? Was it the actual literal eating of flesh with the mouth of his body? The supposition is manifestly absurd; for the Father never took flesh, and the Son could not have so lived by the Father. It is false, therefore, to suppose that the Christian so lives by the Son. *This is the bread which came down from heaven;* this is that way opened unto heaven, this is that faith revealed from heaven—*he that eateth of this bread*—he that cometh by this way—he that believeth this truth—*shall live for ever!* Many of his disciples still understanding him carnally, fixing their attention upon the word eating, and blind to its identity with coming and believing, said, *This is a hard saying; who can hear it?*

Supposing the meaning of it to have been what they thought it was, (and what many still seem to think it was,) it would truly have been a hard saying, a contradictory saying; for he had just called himself both *flesh* and *bread*: "Whoso eateth my flesh;" "He that eateth of this bread." Now flesh is not

bread, and bread is not flesh; so that taking his words in *the letter*, his saying was contradictory. Their murmurs led to his explanation. "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (verses 61, 62.) *Now, while I am with you*, it is within the bounds of physical possibility that you should literally eat my flesh and drink my blood; yet such an interpretation offends you, and very justly. When I ascend up where I was before, and take my flesh with me, there will be an absolute physical impossibility that you should eat my flesh in the way you mean; yet still it will be indispensable to your salvation that you eat my flesh in the way I mean. The next verse explains the mystery, and confirms the interpretation I have here given: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (verse 63.)*

* A similar argument is supplied by another passage in this discourse. Jesus said, (verses 49, 50,) "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." In these words, the bread which Moses gave to the Jewish fathers, is contrasted with the bread which Jesus gives to his true disciples in this remarkable particular; that the persons who ate the one died, but the persons who eat the other never die. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the true bread which came down from heaven, that they who eat it have eternal life: they never die. In what sense then is it, that Christians who eat Christ

Mark, also, the corroborating connexion in the two following verses. "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should

have eternal life, and never die? Where be the tens of thousands, who, with unquestioning sincerity, have believed the dogma of transubstantiation, and eaten what they considered to be Christ's flesh? Dead, all dead. But it will readily be answered, the life which Christians have, and have for ever, is spiritual life. Doubtless it is so; and therefore the bread that supports it, is spiritual bread.

Further, every one who eats the flesh of Christ, and drinks his blood, has eternal life, and shall never perish, shall never die spiritually. This is Christ's own assurance. If then the dogma of transubstantiation be true, it follows, that every one who at any time eats, or has eaten, a consecrated wafer, has eternal life and shall never perish. This includes all who have ever so eaten, though they should afterwards relapse into unclean living, and continue so till death; or relapse into what many would deem more fatal still, viz. heresy and schism; protesting against what they would then have the hardihood to call the false doctrines of the Roman Church, and so becoming what we presume to call Reformers. It would include Luther himself; for thus the matter would stand in close controversy with a Romanist. Did Luther ever eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood? If you say no, you deny transubstantiation, because Luther frequently received the Eucharist in the Church of Rome.

But I say, yes, he did.

Well, then I ask, has Luther eternal life, and did he never perish? If you say, yes, he has eternal life: then you relinquish the exclusive claims of your church, you admit the eternal salvation of a heretic, a schismatic, a man who spent all the later years of his life in avowed hostility to both the doctrines and discipline of the Roman Church; and died in his sins, without confession, without absolution, but glorying in his apostasy!

betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (verses 64, 65.) In explanation of your mistake about *eating*, I tell you that some of you do not *believe*, and this is the reason why I said to you, No man can *come* except it were given him of the Father.

This doctrine was too spiritual for many who had enrolled themselves amongst his followers. "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God."

Peter put the right interpretation upon his words throughout the whole discourse. To believe that he, standing in true and proper human flesh among them, was the Christ, the Son of the living God,

No! no! Luther must have perished everlastingly, and so indeed all our most approved doctors since the time of Luther have held.

You believe then that Luther has not eternal life?

No, he has not.

Then you make Christ a liar; because he said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."

No, but I deny that Luther ever did eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood.

Then you abjure transubstantiation, because Luther frequently received the Holy Eucharist in the Church of Rome.

the Way, the Truth, and the Life: to believe that his words were the words of eternal life, words revealing Him, "in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life;" this was to come to him, this was to eat his flesh and drink his blood, this was to live by him. Jesus acknowledged the correctness of this interpretation, and answered, "*Have not I chosen you twelve?*" If I had not, you would have gone away with the rest, but I have chosen you, and therefore it is given unto you to perceive my spiritual meaning, and therefore you do not go away. Nevertheless, do not suppose that I am deceived in any of you. I know whom I have chosen unto salvation; and I know whom I have chosen, but that the scripture might be fulfilled. I have chosen eleven of you for one purpose, and one of you for another. "*Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil.*"

We see here the nature of genuine spiritual religion. It is not a participation in national privileges, however excellent in themselves, and however highly esteemed as blessings from God. It is not a round of outward observances, nor the regular performance of moral duties, however acceptable those observances and duties may be, as things commanded of God. These things are all upon the surface. When the inward man is right, these things occupy an important place in the witness which that man bears for God in the world, and in the witness which God will bear for that man in the day of judgment.

But still these things do not lie at the root. National privileges may be enjoyed, and outward duties may be regularly and strictly observed, by many who have never *come* to the way of God, never *believed* on the truth of God, never *eaten* of the flesh of the Son of God. Real religion lies within. It is communion with Christ, and with the Father through Christ, such as Christ himself held with the Father. Hear the Apostle John: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life. (For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full." (1 John i. 1—4.)

This fellowship is by faith in Jesus as the truth: it is by coming to Jesus as the Way; it is by being grafted into Jesus as the Vine; it is by realizing the guardian care and watchful supplies of Jesus as the Shepherd; it is by having sympathy, and counsel, and comfort from Jesus as a Friend; it is by enjoying the love of Jesus as a Husband; it is by eating Jesus as the bread of life.

We see by all this what description of interpreta-

tion the Apostles had learned to put upon such language from their Lord. They had been carefully instructed in what he meant by such words as eating his flesh and drinking his blood. They had received the lesson; and knew that they should identify such eating and drinking with coming unto him, and believing on him, and being grafted into him.

Now then let us follow them to that night in which their Master was betrayed; let us enter with them into that upper chamber where they had made ready the passover; and let us attend to what took place there while they sat at supper.

This will lead to a more direct consideration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

I. In its original institution.

II. In its continuance in the churches.

III. In what is essential to its celebration.

IV. In the true spiritual nature of it.

I. The divine institution of the Lord's Supper is contained in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. As they were eating, "He took bread, and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (St. Luke xxii. 19; St. Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.)

This is express and complete, so far as the disci-

ples to whom Jesus addressed himself were concerned. It became obviously and undeniably their duty to observe this ordinance, as commanded by their Lord and Master. But this, of itself, would not prove that the ordinance was to be *continued* in the church after those first disciples had fallen asleep. Some of the things which the Lord commanded them were not to be continued. For example, when sending the twelve forth to preach, he commanded them, saying, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat." (St. Matt. x. 9, 10.) From these words it became their plain duty to go forth without any of the ordinary means of support; but it does not follow that all who have succeeded them in the ministry of the Word should go forth in like manner. And doubtless had the Scriptures contained nothing more upon the subject of the Lord's Supper than the commandment of Jesus to the twelve disciples, a similar line of argument might fairly be applied to invalidate the *continuance* of that ordinance in the churches.

II. But it has pleased God to place this matter beyond the reach of reasonable doubt, and to give us as express an authority for the continuance, as for the original institution, of the Lord's Supper. St. Paul was not one of the disciples to whom Jesus gave the commandment. At that time he was not

a disciple at all, but an opposer and persecutor. Afterwards, when he was called to be an Apostle, and sent forth to preach to the Gentiles; to guard, it would seem, against any mistake upon this point, the Lord gave him special instructions similar to his original commandment addressed to the twelve. Of this he thus informs us: "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. xi. 23—25.) And to prevent any subsequent mistake as to the continuance of the ordinance, the Apostle was instructed to declare that it was of uninterrupted divine obligation, until the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, *till he come.*" (verse 26.) The former part of this passage extends the institution to us Gentiles; and the latter part binds it upon us and our children, *till the Lord comes.*

III. The right celebration of the Lord's Supper includes an actual and literal use of bread and wine. This would seem to follow from the language of the

institution itself, "eat," "drink." But this alone would not be conclusive; because such language is, as we have seen, frequently used figuratively, to signify spiritual communion: but here again we are supplied, by the facts of the case, with most conclusive proof, that in the celebration of this ordinance, under apostolical authority, there was the actual use of bread and wine. The members of the primitive Corinthian church were guilty of a carnal abuse of this sacred ordinance. St. Paul reproves them for it, charging them with such reckless and selfish eating and drinking, that while some of the brethren were left without anything, others were surfeited even to drunkenness. His words are, "One is hungry and another is drunken." It is obvious, therefore, that they had actual eating and drinking. (I may add, in passing, that it is equally obvious that what they drank was actually intoxicating wine.) And the Apostle, while directly correcting their abuse of the practice, indirectly stamps the practice itself with his inspired authority. Here was an opportunity afforded of putting a stop to the practice of using literal wine, had such practice been an error. But instead of putting a stop to it, the Apostle plainly sanctions it, provided it were done decently and in order. It follows from this, that whatever views of spiritual truth may be entertained, and whatever spiritual feelings may be experienced; no person, or society of persons, refusing to use, in this ordinance, literal

bread and wine, can be living in obedience to our Lord's commandment. And it follows, also, that the lay members of the church partook of wine, as well as bread; otherwise no opportunity could have arisen for *such* an abuse, or the use of such language.

Again; the right celebration of this ordinance involves an acknowledgment of the doctrine of atonemen, i. e. pardon of sin, through the meritorious substitution of an appointed sacrifice. This was plainly declared by our Lord in the institution of it. "This is my blood which is shed for many, *for the remission of sins.*" This direct connexion between the shedding of Christ's blood and the forgiveness of our sins, is the fundamental truth; without which, it is worse than a perversion of language to admit that there is, or can be, any Christianity at all. None who reject this truth can be living in obedience to the Lord's commandment in this ordinance.

But the right celebration of this ordinance does *not* include any specific and uniform mode of administration; whether as to the words we use, or the postures we adopt, or the frequency of our observance, or the quantity we eat and drink. The words with which Christ himself blessed the bread, or gave thanks, are not recorded, neither are the words of the Apostles.

All such details are left to the discretion of the members of the church in different ages and countries; and may be arranged and altered at discretion, provided always that nothing be enjoined

contrary to God's word written, and nothing practised indecent or disorderly, frivolous or absurd.*

* As a specimen of the frivolous absurdity, if indeed it do not deserve to be more gravely stigmatised, with which men of high station and influence delighted to invest the celebration of this ordinance, I cite the following passage from *Cyril*, Archbishop of Jerusalem. It occurs in his fifth Mystagogic Catechesis.

" Accedens, autem ad communionem, non expansis manuum volis accede, neque cum disjunctis digitis, sed sinistram veluti sedem quandam subjicias dextræ, quæ tantum Regem susceptura est: et concava manu suscipe corpus Christi, dicens: Amen. Sanctificatis ergo diligenter oculis, tam sancti corporis contactu, communica. Cave autem nequid inde excidat tibi: quod enim amittas, hoc tanquam ex proprio membro amiseris.

" Tum vero post communionem corporis Christi accede, et ad calicem sanguinis illius, non extendens manus, sed pronus adorationis in modum et venerationis, dicens: Amen. Sanctificeris eo sanguine Christi, quem assumis; et cum adhuc est humiditas in labiis tuis, manibus attingens, et oculos, et frontem, et reliqua sensuum organa consecra."†

" When you approach, come not with the palms of your hands opened, nor with the fingers separated, but put the left below the right, as a sort of throne for it while it is to receive so great a King, and in the hollow of the hand receive the body of Christ, saying, Amen. Having then carefully hallowed thine eyes by the touch of so holy a body, partake. Beware, however, lest any portion should fall; for whatsoever you lose, you lose as from a member of yourself."

" Then, after partaking of the body of Christ, approach to the cup of his blood, not stretching forth thy hands, but looking to the ground, after the manner of adoration and worship, saying, Amen. Be thou then sanctified with the blood of Christ which thou takest; and while yet the moisture is on thy lips, touch with thy hands and hallow with it thine eyes, and forehead, and other organs of sense."

† Mysta. Catec. V. §§ 18, 19.

It is of much consequence thus to distinguish between what is essential to the ordinance as of divine institution, and what is adventitious as of human arrangement. If there be no bread used, or no wine, or if there be no confession of the great doctrine of atonement, the ordinance is vitiated. The Lord's Supper, as the Lord appointed it, is not observed. But it may be observed where there is no Liturgy, no prescribed form of consecration, no rubrical directions concerning the postures of the minister, the position or description of the table, or the time and manner of placing the bread and wine upon it.

On all such matters it is lawful for any national or particular church to adopt any such arrangements as shall be deemed expedient for decency and order; and when they are adopted, it is not lawful for any private member of such church to violate them. But it is lawful for any other national or particular church to adopt other different arrangements, (provided always that nothing be enjoined contrary to God's word written,) and it is schismatical tyranny in any one church to impose her own arrangements (as necessary to salvation) upon another; or to deny the true and saving Christianity of other churches, because they prefer their own arrangements, and refuse to adopt hers.

We are confirmed in this judgment by the difference between the instructions given by inspiration of God in the Jewish ordinances and in the christian.

In Judæism, uniformity in detail was necessary for the completeness and integrity of the type, therefore every garment and every movement of the sacrificing priest was specified in the divine institution: but now the great Antitype is come, the one sacrifice once, and once for all, offered, and the true ever-living priest entered into heaven itself; now, the conformity required is reduced to the simplest elements, and no details of administration, whether of dress or posture, whether of minister or people, are specified. We now consider

IV. The true spiritual nature of the Lord's Supper.

This may, I think, be perfectly and clearly considered under five heads.

(1.) It is a commemoration of an absent friend. The friend is Jesus Christ. Where is he now? I do not ask this with reference to his Godhead; in this respect he is everywhere essentially omnipresent, "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead." But his manhood, and especially the visible part of it, his body, which was born of the Virgin Mary, which hungered, thirsted, suffered, died, was buried, and rose again the third day; his body concerning which, after it was risen, he said, "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (St. Luke xxiv. 39.) So considered, where is he? The answer is, "In heaven." He went away into heaven, and will come again in like manner as he went. (Acts i. 11.) Before he departed, he appointed this memorial of himself to be

observed by his friends during his absence. "He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do *in remembrance of me.* Likewise also the cup after supper," &c. Thus, this was to be done in remembrance of him, until he should return again, when of course this memorial, intended for his absence, would cease.

This seems fairly to conclude against his bodily presence in the ordinance. Remembrance refers to a transaction past, or an individual absent, and not to anything present. Of course he was present when he first desired them to do it, and shewed them what to do; but he did not so desire them, till he was on the point of leaving them; and his commandment to continue the practice, had obvious and natural reference to his approaching absence. If he intended this eating and drinking to be done by his church in his presence, he used a word calculated to mislead when he said, do this in *remembrance* of me.* If at the words of consecration, he comes, then the time is arrived for discontinuing this ordinance, for it is instituted only *till* he comes.

(2.) It is a confession of faith.

* "And to the end that we should alway *remember* the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to us; he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual *remembrance* of his death, to our great and endless comfort."—*Communion Service,* Church of England.

As often, however frequently or rarely it may be, as we obey this commandment of the Lord, eating this bread and drinking this cup, we do "*shew* the Lord's death, until he comes." By an outward and visible action, which may be seen and known of all around us, we point to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of our hope in the day of judgment, when he shall come in his glory. We confess him, not only in our own hearts in secret before his all-searching eye, but openly also "before men." Such an open acknowledgment of him now during his absence, and while the world is rejecting him, he expressly requires from his church, and connects it with a corresponding acknowledgment of her upon his return. "Whosoever shall confess me *before men*, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." (St. Luke xii. 8.) To receive the Lord's Supper is to *shew* our faith in the Lord's death; it is a public declaration that we renounce every other way, or supposed way, of salvation, and cleave only unto Him.

(3.) It is a vow of devoted service.

It is from this that it derived the name of sacrament. *Sacramentum* signifies an oath. It was commonly used to express the obligation under which Roman soldiers bound themselves unto death, when they entered the army. And because the members of Christ's church did in baptism make, and at the Lord's Supper repeat, a solemn oath or vow to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants until their lives

end; those ordinances came to be called, in the Latin churches, sacramenta, or sacraments. This is the simple and intelligible origin of this much-abused word, which has been made, in the imagination of theologians, to signify what it never signified in any language. The meanings ascribed to it are so entirely arbitrary, and so utterly wide of the literal signification of the word itself, that in the disputations which have arisen about them, there is no common standard to refer to, and of course controversy is interminable.

In our church catechism we ask, "What meanest thou by this word sacrament?" And instead of giving in answer, the English of the word, which is its real and true meaning, and concerning which, therefore, there could have been no protracted controversy; we answer, "I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."

It is not pretended that this is the meaning of the word, but only what we choose to mean by it. We may teach our children to mean all this by it, but we cannot force the word to mean this, or anything like this. And if we thus arbitrarily apply a meaning to the word, which it will not bear; we have no reason to complain of others, who apply another and a different meaning to it, though it be as arbitrary and as foreign from the right and true use of the word as ours.

I do not deny, or dispute, the right of any living

society to adopt a word from a dead language, and ascribe to it any meaning they please; provided that in all their documents and works of official authority, they adhere consistently to that meaning. But another society may, on the same principle, claim the same right, and adopt the same word, ascribing to it a very different meaning; and in such a case, it is obvious that the use of this word, in controversy between the two societies, is more likely to mystify and perplex, than to elucidate and explain.

If the word occurred in the Scriptures, the case would be wholly different; for then, every Christian society would be equally bound to investigate, and if possible to ascertain, the sense in which the sacred writer used it, and to receive that sense as a common standard: but the word now under consideration, though in such incessant use among ecclesiastical controversialists, *never once occurs in the inspired volume.* It is for this reason, that in my endeavours to avoid ambiguity, I have refrained as far as possible from the use of this shibboleth, and adopted the expression which is sanctioned by apostolical usage, *the Lord's Supper.* (1 Cor. xi. 20.)

The open celebration of this ordinance, might well be considered a solemn vow, pledge, or oath of allegiance to the Lord Jesus, accompanied as it was by exposure to imminent danger. The stream of authority ran against the infant church, even to violent persecution. Great was the temptation, therefore, by which converts were exercised, to conceal their

convictions within their own bosoms, or at farthest within the circle of their faithful and already converted friends; if by so doing they might have the saving benefits of the christian religion, without incurring the present perils of the christian church. Participation in the Lord's Supper was incompatible with such concealment; because it was an overt act, open to the inspection of any spy, and easy of proof before the magistrates.

It was, therefore, not only a profession of faith, but a profession under such circumstances as invested it with the character of a solemn enlistment by men who had counted the cost, and come to the determination not to esteem their lives dear to themselves in comparison with the high duty and everlasting blessedness of serving the Lord Christ.

(4.) It is a spiritual feeding upon the truth.

Truth is to a man's soul what food is to his body. If the body be healthful, food is enjoyed, and ministers growth: it great pleasure in the taking, and strength when taken. If the soul be healthful, truth is in like manner attended with gratification and production of strength and growth. Jesus Christ is "the truth." Jesus Christ is "God manifest in the flesh." *The flesh of Christ, i. e. his body and blood, express comprehensively all revealed truth.* To feed on truth, is to eat and drink Christ: to eat his body, and drink his blood. If any man feed not on the truth, if he enjoy it not, tasting that the Lord is good; (Ps. xxxiv. 8;) if he eat not the

body of Christ, and drink not his blood, he has no true spiritual life in him. (St. John vi. 53.)

The Lord's Supper expresses this, not by words only, but also by material things. Our sense of taste is appealed to, as well as our mental or spiritual perceptions. Religion is not a science, but a life. Truth is not a lesson to be learned in the intellect, but an incorporation including the whole man, the sentient, the animal parts, as well as the intellectual. It is union with Christ. He dwells in our hearts by faith, (Eph. iii. 17,) and we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Ib. v. 30.)

Of this the Lord's Supper is the outward and visible expression: valuable, highly so, as all means are which the Lord has appointed, but valuable only as means for the attainment of the higher end in view. This accounts, and I think very satisfactorily, for the fact, that the Lord's Supper is so rarely mentioned in the history or writings of the Apostles. They were so engrossed in thinking and feeling, and speaking, and writing about the great end, that they seldom dwell upon the details of the means. If we except the passing mention made of "breaking of bread," in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, (and the application of that to the Lord's Supper is doubtful,) the subject of the Lord's Supper is not so much as alluded to in the entire narrative. In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, there is no mention of or allusion to it. In his second Epistle to the Corinthians, there is no allu-

sion to it. In his Epistles to the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica, we do not meet with the slightest allusion to it. In his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, where some instruction upon the subject might have been expected, there is no allusion to it. The same is true of his Epistle to Philemon, and I think also of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The only clause in this epistle that can be mistaken for an allusion (and that a remote and obscure one) to the Lord's Supper, is chap. xiii. 10. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." This appears to me to be a general contrast between Christianity and Judæism, expressing the impossibility of practically combining them, but without any special reference to the Lord's Supper. In this opinion I am not singular.*

In the Epistle general of St. James, there is no allusion to it. In the two Epistles of St. Peter, no allusion to it. In the three Epistles of St. John, no allusion to it. In the Epistle of St. Jude, no allusion to it!

* "Under the law it was appointed, that they which served in the tabernacle should eat of those sacrifices which were offered upon the altar; but now it is otherwise: we have a spiritual and a living altar and sacrifice, even Christ Jesus himself; of whom they cannot obtain any right to partake, that are addicted to the ceremonies of the abrogated law.—*Bishop Hall*, apud Mant and D'Oyley, in loco.

"De hoc altari edimus, dum salutem ex cruce Christi percipimus. Qui autem legalia custodient, non habent partem in efficacia passionis Christi."—*Estius* in P. S.

The reader will notice that this is not a matter of opinion, liable to error and open to correction, but a plain matter of fact: and certainly, if it be a primary duty (as without doubt it is) to give diligent heed to the truth as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and not only so, but also to the scriptural *proportions* in which it is pressed upon the church;* there

* "If it can be shewn by any incontrovertible proofs that every doctrine and precept of the Scriptures, so far as they *practically* concern us, are *prominent* in *proportion* to their *importance*, whether the subject be a doctrine to be believed or a duty to be performed; a grace to be cultivated; a sin to be avoided; or a corruption to be subdued: if it can be proved that just in proportion as the subject is connected with our salvation, so is it made plain and frequently recurred to; while matters more remotely connected with that primary object are more obscure and less frequently brought forward; if this feature of revelation can be established as existing, it is certain that it would not only tend to assist the Bible student in his inquiries, but supply us with a standard by which deviations from truth might be detected."—*Bunbury.*

"Take heed unto the doctrine not only that every part be according to the rule, but, all parts, in their several relations, so held and exhibited as to be *according to the proportion of faith.*"

"There is a proportion of faith, because there is a body of faith;—a system of faith, with a beauty of symmetry in the whole, as well as in the parts; a harmony of relation, without a discernment of which the full value of no one member can be understood. In one sense, it is right to say that all parts of the system of revealed truth are essential—essential to the complete *integrity* of the system they certainly are. In another sense it is right to say that all parts are not essential—essential to the

is much and important instruction in the facts here stated. In all the apostolical writings subsequent

vitality of religion they are not. There are truths, without the confession of which the soul can live unto God, though it may suffer loss; and there are others, without which it cannot; just as there are members of our bodies without which we can survive, and others without which life must be extinct—all essential to integrity, not all to vitality. The pattern of the tabernacle which was shewn to Moses in the Mount had its various parts from the network of the outer court to the most fine gold of the inner sanctuary; and every cord of that network was as essential to the perfect integrity of the pattern as the crowning gold about the mercy-seat. But who can say that the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat within the vail were not more vitally important than the whole framework around them? So in the doctrine of the gospel there is *a proportion of importance;* some parts *more prominent*, more necessary, while none can say to any, 'I have no need of thee;' all 'compacted together by that which every joint supplieth;' all nourished by the same central fountain, animated by one pulse, depending on one head, even Jesus Christ, 'from whom all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment, administered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' To preach the truth in this, its right shape and proportion, is a great duty. All we say may be scriptural; we may keep back no single feature of the whole body of revealed truth; and yet our representations 'may be so confused, disjointed, and shaken; the greater joints so hid in the undue prominence of the less, means so confounded with ends, the stream of life with its channels, the symptoms of health with its properties, outward motion within ward life, the mode of possessing, with the mode of obtaining grace; no separate statement untrue, but each in its relative bearing so confused, as to leave an impression scarcely better than that of positive error.'"—*Charge of the Bishop of Ohio.*

to the institution of the Lord's Supper, that ordinance is plainly mentioned only in one Epistle ; and in that Epistle, only twice: once as a passing illustration of another subject,* and once for the correction of certain practical abuses which had crept into the mode of its observance.

This fact does not in any way disparage the ordinance itself. The Apostles would not of course have adopted any line of procedure justly liable to such a reproach. One plain commandment from their Lord was abundantly sufficient to ensure their dutiful obedience. I speak here of *proportions* in the teaching of the Apostles, whether they were preaching to the heathen, or writing to the saints. They used all appointed means, but they did not treat means as if they were ends; or as if they could of themselves, or by any inherent virtue lodged in them and inseparable from them, secure the ends desired. If the Apostles believed, as the truth of God, what many claiming to be their successors have advanced upon this subject; they have certainly manifested a remarkable unaminity in concealing their real senti-

* The passage here referred to, is 1 Cor. x. 16—21. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (κοινωνία fellowship) of the blood of Christ? &c." I have called it a passing illustration of another subject; and such it will, I think, appear to be, upon a fair and comprehensive examination of the context in which it occurs. Such an examination is beyond the compass of a note, and as I feel its importance, I have appended to this chapter an extract from a sermon upon the passage.

ments. Supposing Peter and John to have held the Roman—or Tractarian—view of "the Holy Eucharist:" their catholic epistles may be cited as the most complete specimens of *reserve* which have ever been published. In those epistles, the sacred writers enlarge, with eager animation, on evangelical doctrine, but make no mention whatever, directly or indirectly, of the Lord's supper, considered as an outward ordinance.

The inward and spiritual end in view in it, and in all other means, is their constant topic. On communion with, and conformity to, God, they expatiate with delight and reiteration. Their heart's desire and prayer—like that of their "beloved brother Paul"—was that God would mercifully grant to his people, "according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith: that they, being rooted and grounded in love, might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God." *

This expresses the true feeding upon the true bread which came down from heaven that a man might eat and not die. This is in truth to eat the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed, and to drink his blood which is drink indeed. This may be had

* Ephes. iii. 16—19.

without the ordinance of bread and wine; and the ordinance in all its outward requirements may be had without this. Here, on both sides, the English church is as express and clear as any lover of scriptural truth can desire.

"The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth, as Saint Augustine saith, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet *in nowise are they partakers of Christ:* but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing." *

"But if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the curate, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, the curate shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the cross for him and shed his blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore, *he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ* profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth." †

The man who is destitute of a lively faith, though he receive the consecrated bread and wine, yet is in no wise a partaker of Christ. And the man who

* Art. xxix. † Rubric Com. Sick.

possesses a lively faith, though he does not receive the consecrated bread and wine, yet he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ.

Language can go no farther than this, in unequivocal explicitness; but language, the medium of reasonable communication between man and man, is powerless against impressions which are unreasonable; and therefore the most conclusive arguments frequently fail of any practical and permanent effects. The intellect may be posed, unable to answer; nay, convinced that there is no real answer to give; yet still, the man, in what is really practical within him, is not satisfied; and perseveres—he can assign no *reason* why—in compliance with existing impressions.

Those who have lived long enough in this world, and with sufficient observation on what passes around them, to be themselves impressed with this truth, will not be very sanguine as to the practical results to be expected from controversy, however unanswerable their arguments may be. Neither is the evasion of such arguments always, or generally, insincere; but the state of the affections interferes with the pure operations of the intellect. The consecutive chain of logical deduction is insensibly snapped asunder by the intrusion of some feeling or association, and the intellectual sorites crumbles into inextricable confusion before the magic wand of a pre-occupied heart.

If this pre-occupation have reached the conscience

as well as the affections, and the existing impression be, or be supposed to be, a matter of faith; then, to resist and reject with disdain the plainest and most conclusive argumentation is invested with all the imaginary heroism of a martyr's fidelity unto death. And thus the problem is solved: revelation is clear and explicit; reason is close, conclusive, and unanswerable; yet transubstantiation survives in the unreasonably impressed affections and consciences of sincere but deluded millions. Is such sincerity an excuse? or can it be fairly pleaded in arrest of judgment against the idolatry inseparable from this dogma as received and used in the Church of Rome? If so, there is no such thing as idolatry; because the millions of Asia prostrate before Vishnoo or Sciva are quite as *sincere* as the millions of Europe prostrate before the consecrated wafer.

On the other hand, if it be just to charge with idolatry the men who "bowed the knee to the image of Baal"—notwithstanding their profound sincerity—and to deny this is to reject holy scripture at once—on what principle of right reason or fair argument can it be unjust to charge with idolatry the most sincere among the multitudes who bow the knee to the image of Jesus, Mary, or Joseph? *They* do not *consider* it idolatry![*] Be it so: neither did "the

* Lord Byron's apology for the idolatries of Rome, vain as it is, is better than this—

. . . . "The kindled marble's bust may wear
More poesy upon its speaking brow

worshippers of Baal," neither did the craftsmen at Ephesus, who shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," consider themselves idolaters.

But here again reason is powerless against impressions; and men called liberal, and impressed with indifference—I might without exaggeration say infidelity—reject arguments they cannot answer, and, in defiance of both reason and Scripture, continue to idolize *sincerity* as the touchstone and turning point of saving truth.

To return, and to conclude. The expectation of the *coming again* of our Lord Jesus Christ is involved in a scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper; which is expressly limited to the period of his absence. This is an animating expectation; and with a few animating words upon it I will close this chapter.

There is a secret and very cordial pleasure, even in the painstaking and fatigue of getting ready and keeping ready, for the arrival of a friend. Jesus is our friend, our best, and kindest, and most faithful friend, and "he is coming." It is not, then, under

> Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear;
> One noble stroke with a whole life may glow,
> Or deify the canvass till it shine
> With beauty so surpassing all below,
> That they who kneel to idols so divine
> Break no commandment, for high heaven is there
> Transfused, transfigurated . . . ."
>
> *Prophecy of Dante.* Canto iv.

the lash of a commandment grievous to be borne, that we would stand in readiness waiting for our Lord; but in the exercise of a watchful and prayerful diligence, which, whatever self-denial it may require, "is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort." Wherever the love of the Lord is, there the holy commandment ceases to be grievous, because the heart's desire is holiness. Wherever the love of the Lord is not, the commandment cannot but be grievous, and will be either carelessly disregarded, or disingenuously evaded, or wilfully disobeyed.

And yet Jesus is the sinner's friend! He is indeed the sinner's friend "till he comes:" but—let the reader mark it well—not when he comes. He came, and lived, and died the friend of publicans and sinners: of sinners of all descriptions without exception, thieves, drunkards, adulterers, blasphemers, murderers, and even Pharisees:* their best friend, opening the veins of his body and the anguish of his soul, to pour forth a rich flood of pardoning mercy to every one that believeth. In this character He still presents himself in the ministry of reconciliation: in this character it is the privilege of his faithful ambassadors again and again to proclaim him amongst the vilest transgressors, yes, and amongst the proudest and most incorrigible moralists; imploring them in his name to be reconciled to God, and urging upon them with

* St. Matt. xxi. 28—32.

tender and affectionate earnestness, that "now is the appointed time, now the day of salvation." Believe in Jesus, feed on him in thy heart, and taste his pardoning blood. Believe in Jesus, feed on him in thy heart, and realize his holy unction. Believe in Jesus, feed on him in thy heart, eat, and live for ever. Hear his own comfortable words unto all who truly turn to him: "Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Hear also what St. Paul saith, "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Hear also what St. John saith, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins."

Now, to-day, while it is called to-day, matters stand thus, and the gracious invitations are repeated. How long this state of things may last, no man knoweth. While Jesus remains absent, this is the state of things; but he is coming, and when he comes, faith is at an end, and patience is at an end: glory is come, and hell is come. Believers are now waiting upon God by faith, and God is waiting upon unbelievers in patience. But when Jesus comes there is no more waiting; the barn for the wheat, glory, glory, glory; the whirlwind and fire for the chaff, ruin, eternal ruin.

Believers, be ready. In the midst of all your sorrows, lift up your heads and your hearts with joy, for your redemption draweth nigh. In the midst of

all your perplexities and temptations, hold fast your confidence; for he in whom you have placed it, and who will never disappoint you, draweth nigh. In the midst of all your fears, maintain your bold confession of Jesus; for he cometh, and whosoever shall be found confessing him before men, shall be confessed and welcomed by him gloriously before the angels of God.

Unbelievers, be ready. Behold, he is coming! Can you resist his arm of power? Can you hush his thunder into silence, or arrest his lightning in its flight? Can you break the sword that is girded upon the thigh of him whose name is King of kings and Lord of lords? or extract the arrows of his bow, which shall be found sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? Helpless rebels, submit! resistance is madness. Believe, and be reconciled.

Believe, and shew the reason of a man.
Believe, and taste the pleasure of a saint.
Believe, and wait with patience for the Lord.
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? (1 Cor. x. 16—18.

In these words of the Apostle, the Christians at Corinth, and all Christians, were referred to the history of the Jewish people, "Israel after the flesh," for instruction on a very important subject. That subject was Idolatry. Its importance to the Corinthians at the time this was written, was a matter of actual practice from day to day. Its importance to us now is chiefly the light and explanation thrown upon other subjects by the Apostle's mode of discussing it. From the fourteenth verse we learn that his object was to withdraw the brethren from all idolatrous practices, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

This is introduced with a *wherefore* (Διοπερ) as a consequence from what has preceded; and in order to catch the drift of the argument, and perceive the position which the passage before us occupies in it, we must refer back to the beginning of the eighth chapter where the subject is introduced.

" Now, as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge ; knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." viii. 1.

We all know that there are no such beings as those whom the Gentiles fancy they are worshipping. We know that Jupiter and Juno and Diana were mere imaginations; that no such beings have any real existence, or ever had. This is indeed sufficient for ourselves, and our duty in this matter would be simple and easy if we had only ourselves to consider; but it is our christian duty to consider our brethren also for their edification. He who acts with reference to himself alone, regardless of his brethren, is puffed up in his selfish knowledge—" *Knowledge puffeth up ;*" but he who acts with reference to the brethren also, for their edification, manifests brotherly love and charity—" *Charity edifieth.*" Now love is better than knowledge, " and if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." ver. 2.

Knowledge that is selfish is thereby proved not to be of the right kind; it may exist where there is no love of God, and consequently no salvation. " But if any man love God the same is known of him."ver. 3. The Apostle then proceeds to apply these general principles to his subject: " as concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.)

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." verses 4—6.

These verses describe the knowledge which was sufficient for those who had it, considering themselves only as individuals; but they were bound to consider others also, who might be sincere at heart, though not so enlightened in their understandings.

"Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge; for some with conscience of the idol, unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." ver. 7.

In itself indeed it is not vital in the sight of God.

"Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse." ver. 8. But it is highly important as regards the brethren, who with comparatively weak understandings may mistake your outward action to mean what in you indeed it does not mean, but what it would, and does mean in them; and thus your selfish indulgence of what in you is christian liberty, based on christian knowledge, may embolden them to do, what in their state of mind, is to them idolatry. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." ver. 9. "For if any man see thee

which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols." "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." verses 10—12. Then follows the Apostle's personal determination in the matter. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." ver. 13.

And having introduced himself by way of example, he enlarges through the whole of the ninth chapter on his mission, his duty, his practice; he then, at the opening of this tenth chapter introduces a reference to Jewish history for further instruction in this matter. The ancient Jews, in the days of Moses, whom he calls our fathers, were privileged with religious ordinances, as we are. They had their baptism, as we have ours; they had their communion, as we have ours; they did all eat the same spiritual meat that we eat, it was not literally the same, for theirs was manna, and ours is bread; but its spiritual meaning was the same: their manna represented Christ, so also does our bread. They did all drink the same spiritual drink that we drink; it was not literally the same, for theirs was water, and ours is wine, theirs was shed from a rock, ours is blessed in a cup; but its spiritual meaning was the same, "*that rock was Christ;*" not of course, literally, it was

stone, and remained stone, and what came out of it was water; but spiritually, they drank of that spiritual drink; and our cup is the New Testament in Christ's blood, not of course literally, it is silver, and remains silver, and what comes out of it is wine; but spiritually, we drink the same spiritual drink.

Those ordinances did not, however, in their case, and do not in our case, ensure salvation.

"With many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." x. 5. This is written for our warning, to guard us against the evils by which they fell. After enumerating some of those evils, the Apostle adds, "Now all those things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." verses 11, 12.

Then for the consolation and encouragement of the brethren, lest such an awful example should dishearten them, he says, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." verse 13.

And so he returns to his main exhortation, which is, that they should flee idolatry. In this matter there was no hidden mystery of divine depth, such as he recognizes in other branches of the subject,

and declares to be beyond man's understanding; on the contrary, he here invites an exercise of their wisdom and judgment: "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say." verse 15.

He then illustrates his subject by a twofold reference—first, to the Lord's Supper among Christians, and, second, to those sacrifices, a part of which was eaten among the Jews; and so returns to the matter of the idols' temples, in which he shows no Christian ought to worship; and the feasts in such temples, in which he shows no Christians ought to eat: because, although what the Gentile worshippers called an idol was a nonentity, as he had before stated, yet, in point of fact, the beings really served in those temples and at those feasts, were the fallen angels; and it was impossible for any man to combine the service of devils with the service of God.

To eat of things consecrated to worship in any temple, is to have fellowship with him, whoever or whatever he may be, who is worshipped in that temple. This is a general principle to all: behold the Jews who did eat of the sacrifices had fellowship (κοινωνοὶ εἰσῖ) with the altar; that is, with God as he was there revealed, the object of worship among the Jews.

Behold the Christian church, the Christians who eat the bread which we break, and drink the cup which we bless, have fellowship (κοινωνία) with the body and blood of Christ; that is, with God as he is now revealed, the object of worship among Chris-

tians. Behold the Gentiles; shall I say that the Gentiles who eat in their temples, and all who eat with them, have fellowship in like manner with their idols? No; for the idol is nothing at all; but this I say, that whatever imaginary beings the Gentiles may fancy to themselves as the object of their worship, they are in fact and reality worshipping devils, and I would not that ye should have fellowship (κοινωνους γίνεσθαι) with devils. It is incompatible with the worship of God.

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." verse 21.

Such was the Apostle's solemn decision in this question of the idols' temples; and when we remember that the worship so characterised and condemned, and from which all Christians were so peremptorily commanded to absent themselves; was the worship of the empire, established, and endowed, and protected by the civil power in all its gorgeous ceremonies; the worship of men of letters and of arts, who lavished, in its honour and embellishment, their richest stores of poetry and painting and sculpture and music; the worship of the people living in their prejudices and habits, and connected with the secular interests of so many thousands of craftsmen; we shall learn to appreciate the bold and holy fidelity of the man of God, who thus pronounced sentence of condemnation upon it. Through the power of God graciously working with, and confirming the

words of his servants, this decision of the Apostle, followed by its legitimate results among the brethren; exorcised the Pantheon, silenced the oracles, and closed the temples of paganism, and in the sequel led all classes of the great community, from the emperor to the common soldier and day labourer, to eat of the bread which we break, and to drink of the cup which we bless.

And now, returning on this, let us briefly derive instruction to ourselves from the Apostle's illustrations of his subject. One of them was taken from the Lord's Supper; the truth concerning it was clear to the Corinthian Christian, while concerning the heathen worship they were still in darkness and doubt, and difference amongst themselves. We may now use the passage conversely, because the truth in the matter of heathenism is now clear to us; but we are still involved in difficulty and differences about the Lord's Supper.

I ask, then,

When the Gentiles were eating the sacrifices in their temples, and holding *fellowship with devils*, as we here learn they did, were they eating the devils? Surely not; they were holding fellowship with them spiritually, but not eating them.

When the Jews were eating the sacrifices in the tabernacle, and holding fellowship with the altar, as we here learn they did, were they eating the altar? Surely not: they were holding fellowship with it spiritually, but not eating it. When Christians are

eating the bread which we break, and drinking the cup which we bless, and holding fellowship with the body and blood of Christ, as we here learn they did; are they eating the body and blood of Christ? By the force of the Apostle's illustrations and parallel, surely not; they are holding fellowship with the body and blood of Christ spiritually, but not eating it.

What, then, though some persons, or many persons, call this spiritual fellowship by the name of eating and drinking, is it really eating and drinking? It is indeed to the spiritual and immortal part of a Christian, what eating and drinking are to his natural body; and therefore it may well and truly be *called* eating and drinking; because the spirit of man may well and truly, and very intelligibly, be said to hunger and thirst, to eat and drink, as well as his body; and therefore the act which satisfies his spirit, may be called eating and drinking, as well as the act, or acts, which satisfy his body.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST MILITANT HERE ON EARTH. THEIR MINISTRY AND CONNEXION WITH THE CIVIL RULER.

A religion with its doctrines revealed: a society with its officers founded—The christian ministry—Clearly distinguished from the lay members of the churches—Their duty—Difference between Christ's language to his inspired Apostles; and St. Paul's language to his uninspired successor—Their authority—Derived from the word of God—Limited by the same—In matters of faith, no addition to, or subtraction from: in matters of ceremony, no opposition to the written word—Members of the church subjects of the state—Inevitable connexion—The civil ruler—Absolute—Mixed—Who are rulers in England? —Duty of rulers.

It has pleased God not only to reveal a religion, but also to found a society among men. The religion has its peculiar doctrines and ordinances, and the society has its peculiar officers and government. The doctrines must be preached and the ordinances

administered; and the persons entrusted with these important functions must be under adequate superintendence for the securing of efficiency and order, and the correction of abuse and irregularity should any arise. In addition to the rules which God has given for the government of his society upon earth, and which are general; other and more particular rules have been added by men. These have not been altogether and every where the same; and they may in many things be different, "according to diversities of countries, times, and men's manners," * so that all be done with due deference to what God himself has ordained, and nothing in opposition to it. When the rules introduced by men are in opposition to the word of God, the society adopting them ceases to be a church, and ceases to deserve the name of a church. But short of this, the diversities which may be introduced without any direct opposition to the word of God, have led to the formation among men of many societies; differing from one another in many particulars, to which the members of each are so wedded, that all attempts at amalgamation must of necessity be fruitless; and yet, in the sight of God, and for all the essential purposes of salvation, there may still be but one society.

We are now to consider the officers of that society: the christian ministry—its appointment—its duty—its authority, and the limit of its authority; in connexion with the duty of the lay members of

* *Art.* xxxiv. *Church of England.*

the churches, and especially of the civil "powers that be."

I. On the appointment of the christian ministry, I need not say much in this place, having already printed and published to an eighth edition, a full statement of my views and convictions on the subject.*

* *Lectures on the church.* See Lecture second, on ordination, succession, the power of the keys, &c. On the power of the keys, I may here add the confirming testimony of Bishop Jewell, who, though classed among "irreverent dissenters," by Romanising deserters from the English church; will ever be considered a faithful and wise witness for the truth, both scriptural and ecclesiastical, by all sound and consistent churchmen. The work of his from which I now quote, comes to us with more than the weight of his individual opinion, as it received the sanction of Convocation.

"We say that Christ has given to his ministers the power of binding and loosing, of opening and shutting. And we say that the power of loosing consists in this, that the minister, by the *preaching of the gospel*, offers to dejected minds and true penitents, through the merits of Christ, absolution; and doth assure them a certain remission of their sins, and the hopes of eternal salvation; or secondly, reconciles, restores, and receives into the congregation and unity of the faithful, those penitents, who by any grievous scandal or known and public offence, have offended the minds of their brethren, and, in a sort, alienated and separated themselves from the common society of the church and body of Christ. And we say the minister doth exercise the power of binding or shutting, when he shutteth the gate of the kingdom of heaven against unbelievers and obstinate persons, and denounceth to them the vengeance of God and eternal

I see no reason to withdraw or modify that statement, either with regard to the nature of the apostolical commission, or to the essential difference between the Lord's appointment of the Apostles, and

punishment; or excludeth out of the bosom of the church, those that are publicly excommunicated; and that God himself doth so far approve whatever sentence his ministers shall so give, that whatsoever is either loosed or bound by their ministry here on earth, he will in like manner bind or loose, and confirm in heaven. The key with which these ministers do shut or open the kingdom of heaven, we say, with St. Chrysostom, is *the knowledge of the scripture;* with Tertullian, is *the interpretation of the law;* and with Eusebius, is *the word of God.* We say the disciples of Christ received this power, (from him,) not that they might hear the private confessions of the people and catch their whispering murmurs, as the popish priests every where now do, and that in such a manner as if all the force and use of the keys consisted only in this; but that they might go and preach and publish the gospel, that so they might be a savour of life unto life to them that did believe; and that they might be also a savour of death unto death to those that did not believe; that the minds of the pious, who were affrighted with the sense of their former ill lives and errors, after they beheld the light of the gospel, and believed in Christ, might be opened by the word of God, as doors are with a key; and that the wicked and stubborn, who would not believe and return into the way, might be left, shut up, and locked, and, as St. Paul expresseth it, 2 Tim. iii. 13, might *wax worse and worse.* This we take to be the meaning of the *keys,* and that in this manner, the consciences of men are either bound or loosed. We say that the priest is a judge; but then we say with St. Ambrose, that he hath not the right of any dominion, and therefore Christ reprehended the Scribes and Pharisees with these words, that he might reprove their negligence in teaching. (Matt. xxiii. 13; Luke xi. 52.) *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, for you have taken away the key of knowledge, and shut*

their appointment of their successors. It is enough for my present purpose to revert to the facts, that there was such an appointment, and that there has continued, and does still continue, such a succession; not necessarily, or as I think, possibly traceable link after link, in any one particular bishopric, whether of Crete after Titus, or of Ephesus after Timothy: but generally an Episcopal succession as undeniable on the face of history, as that there has been a succession of monarchs on the thrones of Europe, or generals in command of the armies of the nations.

The distinction between the MINISTRY of the churches, and the great body of the members, is

up the kingdom of heaven against men. Seeing then the key, by which a passage is opened for us into the kingdom of heaven, is the word of the gospel, and the interpretation of the law and the scriptures: where there is no such word, there is no key. And seeing the same word was given to all, and the key which pertains to all, is but one; we say that the power of all ministers, as to binding and loosing, is one and the same, and we say, that even the Pope himself, notwithstanding his flatterers, do so sweetly sooth him up with these words. (Matt. xvi. 19.) "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" as if they belonged to him, and to no other mortal under heaven, except he makes it his business to tend and subdue the consciences of men to the word of God; we deny that even he (as I said) can either open or shut, or hath at all the keys; and although he doth teach and instruct the people, (which I wish he would sometimes do truly, and at last be persuaded to believe it is at least some part of his duty and office,) but yet, if he did so, his key would be neither better nor greater than that of others, for who made the difference? Who taught him to open more learnedly, or absolve more powerfully, than his brethren? —*Jewell's Apology.* chap. ii. § 8.

made as plain in holy scripture as words can make anything. I might with truth say plainer: because it does not rest on words alone, however explicit, but is exhibited in symbols also. The Divine Head of the church, when giving instructive visions, as well as instructive messages, to his beloved disciple in Patmos, showed him seven candlesticks to represent the seven churches of Asia; but instead of allowing him to imagine that the ministers of those churches were included in this representation; he presented to his view seven stars also, and informed him that these represented the seven angels, or messengers, or chief ministers of the churches. (Apoc. i. 20.) Compare 2 Cor. viii. 23, where ministers are called "*the messengers of the churches*, and the glory of Christ."

This is conclusive for a continued ministry after the Apostles, because not one of the Apostles themselves was then presiding over any of these seven churches. It might with probable truth be said that St. John was the only one of the Apostles alive at the time. There was, therefore, by divine institution, not only a temporary appointment in the persons of the Apostles at the commencement of the christian churches, but also a standing ministry in those churches.

St. Paul makes this distinction very clear, illustrating it by the difference between workmen and the materials upon which they work, labourers and their husbandry, builders and the building upon which they are engaged. "*We* are labourers to-

gether with God: *ye* are God's husbandry, *ye* are God's building."*

This divine appointment of the christian ministry invests it with a grandeur and solemnity well calculated to quicken into vigorous exercise the best energies, mental and bodily; while it awakens the most penetrating moral responsibilities, of every man who holds the high commission. It is a blessing to the world every way. Faithful ministers are directly a blessing as disturbers of the carnal security of fallen men, as living specimens as well as clear expositors of divine truth, and as channels of consolation through the medium of their own personal experience and prayerful sympathy.† And unfaithful ministers! Alas, unhappy men! It is painful to contemplate either their own miseries, or the widespread and disastrous offences of which they are the occasion; yet, even they, in the wonder-working hand of God, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, are made in some respects a blessing. They teach with a power and a plainness which mere words cannot convey; that christian character is not inseparable from christian privilege however eminent; that baptism, the Lord's supper, and laying on of hands, may all be in strict accordance with the Lord's commandment, where yet the lively image of the Lord's character is not. They loudly warn us therefore not to depend, for our personal Christianity, upon our ecclesiastical privileges; but to seek it in our closets and upon our knees, in the exer-

* 1 Cor. iii. 9. † 2 Cor. i. 3—6.

cises of personal piety. They warn the people also to look, in every case, higher than the instrument employed; that their faith may stand not in the wisdom of man but in the power of God. "For who is Paul?" inquires the Apostle, "and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."* *One*, not one only man—Paul and Apollos were two—but one only ministry, one only ordinance of God comprising a variety of instrumentality in the great field of labour; and every man, engaged in any branch or branches of that labour, shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. He who has faithfully laboured as a planter, shall receive a planter's reward; and he who has faithfully laboured as a waterer, shall receive a waterer's reward; he who labours as a breaker up of fallow-ground, shall receive a breaker's reward; and he who bears the lambs of the flock in his bosom, and gently leads the weary and infirm, shall receive a shepherd's reward. No labour in the Lord shall be labour in vain. The reward is sure, not because the labourer deserves it, but because the Lord has promised it; not the servant's merit, but

* 1 Cor. iii. 5—8.

the Master's veracity, is the ground work of the glorious recompence of the reward.

II. This leads to a consideration of the duty of the ministry. Their first and highest duty is to "preach the word," all of it, not easy and popular selections only, but "all the revealed will of God."*

Upon one special and very important subject I invite attention to the difficulty and duty of this impartiality. The instruction given to us in the Bible is not confined to those things which are generally considered, and commonly called, religious; it extends to those things also which are commonly called political. In other words, it addresses itself to the duties of a man, not only as an immortal individual with regard to God and the world to come; but also as a member of civil society, with regard to the government under which he lives, or of which he may form a part, whether supreme or subordinate. Upon this point, however, there exists a deep-rooted prejudice in the minds of many who profess in all sincerity to receive the Bible as a revelation from God. The faithful christian pastor is compelled to experience the action of this prejudice. Should the gospel of the day contain the well-known words of our Lord, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The minister may read the whole passage at the communion table without exciting any comment;

* Acts xx. 26, 27.

he may ascend his pulpit and preach from the latter clause, enlarging upon the things that are God's and upon men's duty with regard to them; he may repeat this Sunday after Sunday throughout the year, entering into details and specifying particulars. No special notice is taken of this. He is giving what is received, as a matter of course, as religious instruction. But if, upon any one Sunday of the year, he should, in the honesty and impartiality of his heart, select the former clause for a text; and, treating it as he did the other, enlarge upon the things that are Cæsar's, and upon men's duty with regard to them, entering into details and specifying particulars; immediately the prejudice referred to is called into action; he is "political;" all his religious instruction for months is forgotten; in this one trespass he is condemned, as if his subject had no place in the revelation of which he is an authorized interpreter. Yet his subject, and possibly his manner of treating it, is as truly scriptural in the second case, as in the first. What then is the duty of a minister of Christ's church, solemnly commissioned to preach the word? Is he to yield to the force of existing prejudice and wilfully to suppress, from month to month, and year to year, a portion of that divine revelation? Is he for the sake of present peace to become instrumental, however unintentionally, in forwarding the designs of the disaffected, by leaving the institutions of his country and the authority of her rulers dissociated from the high

sanction of the word of God and the constraining influence of christian motives? Is he to deprive political duties of all the sacredness and power of religious obligation?

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."* Suppose the case of a steward employed by a nobleman and sent to the management of his estate. Upon making himself acquainted with particulars, he perceives that certain fields upon his lord's property have been allowed to lay fallow and useless for years; and upon inquiry, he finds a strong prejudice among the tenantry against any attempt to cultivate those fields. What becomes his duty? Is he to yield to the prejudice of the tenantry, and leave the fields uncultivated to the detriment of his master's interest; or is he to resist the prejudice, and advance, with caution and skill indeed, but with unwavering determination, to reclaim the wastes, that they also,—not instead of the others, or to the neglect of any other, but *also* in addition to all the others,—may yield a return to his lord?

The answer, in this case, is ready; and the application is plain and convincing to "the stewards of the mysteries" of God.

It would be difficult to estimate the amount of damage sustained by our own country, or the imminence of the present danger to our national institutions, from the lack of this comprehensive impartiality in their treatment of the word of God, by the ministers of our church.

* 1 Cor. iv. 2.

The writer of these pages heard a noble lord, who had been a member of the House of Commons for above a quarter of a century, declare in a very solemn way, that during all that time he had been regular in his attendance at divine service in some church in London, or in his parish church in the country; and that he had never once heard a word of christian instruction addressed to legislators or magistrates with reference to their official responsibilities, or the discharge of their official duties. The natural consequence was—as he confessed in his own case, and as far as he knew the same applied to his brother members and justices—that religion was looked upon as a matter of individual concern in private life, and wholly detached from their public functions. This is the gangrene which is consuming our true national strength; so that while the grace of God is triumphing in the hearts of multitudes of our fellow countrymen considered as private individuals; the nation, as such, is proclaiming its infidelity, its incapacity to know what is religious truth as completely as if the Bible had never been written, or as if it consisted of hieroglyphics which had never been decyphered—or if not this, then worse than this; its utter disregard of what it knows to be God's truth; degrading it, for man's present convenience and hollow peace, to a level with divers falsehoods.

But while it is the duty of the ministers of the churches of Christ, to treat the word of God in their

ministrations, without partiality as well as without hypocrisy: it is equally their duty to bear in practical remembrance that their commission extends to nothing more than a ministry of the word, the written word of God. It includes no general undefined authority either to do or teach at their discretion.

This is the point selected for especial enforcement in the parting charge of the aged Apostle. Writing to one of his immediate successors in the ministry, who was then the Bishop of the church of Ephesus; and having referred him to the holy Scriptures, whose sufficiency for wisdom unto salvation by faith, and for *thoroughly* furnishing the man of God unto *all* good works, he pointedly reiterates; he then in all solemnity adds, "I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; *preach the word;* be instant in season, out of season,"* &c.

I cite this passage, not merely for the sake of these plain and solemn words considered directly in themselves; but still more for the sake of a very instructive contrast between our Lord Jesus Christ's charge to his inspired Apostles, and St. Paul's charge to his uninspired successor. Our Lord's charge is recorded in the twentieth chapter of St. John: "Then said Jesus unto them again, peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send

* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."*

Here a similitude is declared between the Father's mission of Christ, and Christ's mission of the Apostles, "As my Father sent me, *even so* send I you;" and an interesting question arises as to how far, and in what respects, this similitude applies, and was intended to apply. That it cannot be applied absolutely in every respect, is obvious; because the Father sent the Lord Jesus to be a sacrifice for sin, a propitiation through faith in his blood, a substitute suffering the just for the unjust: but the Lord Jesus did not send the Apostles *even so;* they required a sacrifice for their own sins, and could in no wise be a sacrifice for the sins of others. Again, the Father sent the Son to be the "first fruits" of the resurrection of the body: to die indeed in human flesh, but to see no corruption: the Son did not send the Apostles *even so;* Peter and James and John and the rest are dead and buried, their bodies saw corruption and are under the power of it to this day. In these respects there is no similitude, and therefore an absolute unqualified similitude cannot be contended for.

It has been argued, from these words, that as the Father sent Christ into the world to forgive sins,

* St. John xx. 21—23.

not independently indeed and of himself, but as the accredited messenger of, and in conjunction with, the Father: *even so* Christ sent the Apostles into the world to forgive sins; not independently and of themselves, but as the accredited messengers of, and in conjunction with, Christ.

But, as far as the words before us are concerned, it might with equal cogency be argued, that as the Father sent Christ into the world, "free from all spot of sin original or actual," *even so* Christ sent the Apostles into the world "free from all spot of sin original or actual."

This is not pretended, notwithstanding the similitude expressed in our Lord's language. That similitude, therefore, is not absolute, but must be modified; our adversaries in this controversy themselves being the judges.

The question recurs, wherein consists the true force of our Lord's expression *even so?* And it is scripturally answered by referring to other parts of our Lord's farewell addresses to the eleven. He said "When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning."* Here their witness or testimony is combined with the testimony of the Holy Ghost. And describing what that is, the Lord said, "When he, the Spirit of truth is

* St. John xv. 26, 27.

come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; . . . he shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you."*

The testimony of the Spirit is not concerning himself, but concerning Jesus—"He shall glorify me"—"He shall take of mine and show it unto you." The testimony of the Spirit is to THE TRUTH, to "God manifest in the flesh," to the things of the Father revealed in Jesus Christ. He shall testify of me, said the Lord to the Apostles, "and *ye also* shall bear witness" to the same truth. So far the similitude announced in the expression "*even so* send I you," does indeed apply.

Jesus came into the world to bear witness to the truth. So he says of himself expressly. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."† Not that this was the *sole* object of his mission; for elsewhere, as we have seen, other and wonderful objects are assigned; but this was one, and an important one. To this he was "sent by the Father," as he himself plainly announced in the synagogue at Nazareth, when he read, and applied to his own mission, the language of the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to *preach* the gospel to the poor; *he hath sent me* to

* St. John xvi. 13—15. † St. John xviii. 37.

heal the broken-hearted, to *preach* deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to *preach* the acceptable year of the Lord."* The Father sent the Son to bear witness to the truth. The object of the mission of the Holy Ghost was, that He should bear witness to the truth. With this the mission of the Apostles is combined, "Ye also shall bear witness." Here we perceive the true, and the only, point of the application of our Lord's words *even so*. As the Father sent me to bear witness to the truth, and as I send the Holy Ghost in you to bear witness to the truth; even so send I you into the world, and ye also shall bear witness to the truth.†

* St. Luke iv. 17—19.

† "When our Lord says that He sends the Apostles, 'as the Father had sent Him,' He must be understood to mean, that He sends them with the same design with which He himself came, that of doing the work, and seeking the honour of Him that sent him; that of propagating and establishing the kingdom of the Messiah, by faith in his blessed gospel: also, that He sends them with the same authority, *so far as was necessary* for compassing that design."—*Dean Stanhope*, apud Mant and D'Oyley, in loc.

"Our Lord here invests the Apostles with as ample powers of *preaching the gospel* themselves, and commissioning others so to do, as he himself had been entrusted with by God the Father."—*Dr. Nicholl*, ibid.

"*Sicut tu me misisti*, &c. St. John xvii. 18.

"Causa redditur, vel. i. cur hi supra alios auxilio Divino egeant, quia durum munus suscepturi sint legationis pro Christo, 2 Cor. v. 20; Eph. vi. 30; vel. 2, quare nolit adhuc eos auferi è mundo, quia mittendi sunt ut per totum mundum *prædicent*: et ut ritè

They did so. They proclaimed the truth of the invisible God, as revealed in the incarnate Son. It was not themselves as fallible men who spake, but the Holy Ghost spake in them and by them, without any possibility of mistake. They bound on earth what is bound in heaven, they loosed, they retained and remitted, even as Jesus himself did; so that it might be truly said of their word, as of his, "The word that I speak unto you, the same shall judge you at the last day."*

Further. They not only *spoke* the truth, they *wrote* it also: partly in the overruling providence of God throwing some of them into situations where they could not continue, without interruption, to speak it, as when St. Paul was made a prisoner; and partly by the express commandment of the Lord, as to St. John in Patmos, "Write it in a book, and send it unto the seven churches."† And accordingly, the aged Evangelist informs us concerning the things that *are written;* not indeed that they are all the things which were said and done by Jesus, but that they were sufficient. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son

hoc officio fungantur, petit eos sanctificari. Illud καθως aliquam, *non omnimodam,* congruentiam significat, in ipso scil, dogmate quod erat prædicandum, vel in eodem fine, nempe ut totam salutis doctrinam hominibus tradant; *non auctoritate.* Christus à Patre se missum passim in hoc Libro prædicat, nec rarò in illo sensu *docendi.* Vide Esa. lxi. 1."—*Lucas Brugensis, Toletus, Beza, et Grotius in* P. S.

* St. John xii. 48. † Rev. i. 11.

of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."*

Having caused such writings to be produced, the Lord himself caused them to be preserved. And thus, without a perpetuity of plenary inspiration unto infallibility in any man; the churches of Christ militant here on earth, are supplied with infallible truth in perpetuity. The written word was completed, and in anticipation of this, when an inspired Apostle, about to finish his earthly course, addressed a parting charge to one of his immediate successors in the ministry of the churches, he did not make use of any such language as the Lord Jesus had used to the chosen vessels of inspiration. St. Paul did not say to Timothy or Titus, as the Lord sent me, even so send I you; he did not presume to prolong that sound, but he said, "I charge you before the Lord, *preach the word!*"

It was no part of Timothy's commission to testify from himself, as if the Spirit of truth had been promised to him, as it was to the Apostles: his commission was to preach the word, and therefore his duty was to give attention to reading and meditation, that he might profit in the knowledge of what he was sent to teach. When Jesus commissioned the Apostles, he told them "to take no thought beforehand what they should speak, neither to premeditate, but," he added, "whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak,

* St. John xx. 30, 31.

but the Holy Ghost."* When St. Paul commissioned Timothy, his strain was wholly different. He said, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine: . . . meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." †

Here, then, at this stage—if holy Scripture be indeed taken as our guide—the "even so send I you" must be cut off for ever. With the perfection of the inspired canon, and the death of the last of the Apostles, the "even so send I you" was completely superseded by the "preach the word." The transition was not a gradual one, shading off among the primitive fathers and ministers of the early churches; it was instantaneous and complete. Between plenary inspiration, and the want of it; between infallibility to compose "the word," and the duty of preaching the word as composed, "there is a great gulf fixed." To a ministry such as the Apostles *exercised* in person, no man can, I think, scripturally lay claim; but a ministry such as the Apostles *delegated* is, with all its duties, dignities, and responsibilities, entrusted to every man who is lawfully called thereto by prayer and the laying on of hands. It would, therefore, be more strictly correct to call the ministers of the churches successors of Timothy and Titus, than successors of the Apostles. The commission which Jesus gave to the Apostles,

* St. Mark xiii. 11. † 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

they have not: the commission which Paul gave to Timothy, they have.*

III. The authority of the ministry. This is dis-

* "If Timothy and Titus declared the truth of God as correctly as Paul and Peter, then it might be said with equal truth to Timothy and Titus as to Paul and Peter, Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained; whatsoever ye bind on earth, is bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye loose on earth, is loosed in heaven. They declared and pronounced to God's people, God's believing people, being penitent, the forgiveness of sins unto salvation; and they declared and pronounced, that he that believeth not shall be damned.

"In this sense alone, it appears to me, and under this limitation, could this branch of the apostolical commission be transmitted. And in this sense alone does the church seem to be justified in the use of her Lord's awful words in her services for ordination. Such use, so understood, is in character with all her services. They are constructed for true christian believers, and the prayers offered in them are treated as prayers of faith, that is, prayers *answered*. According to that saying of the Lord, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' Prayer for the Holy Ghost upon the candidate for the priesthood, to *replenish him with the truth of God's doctrine*, being offered in faith and answered; he is addressed as under that divine guidance and teaching which will cause his word of doctrine to be conformable to the mind of God as stated by the Apostles, and therefore binding and loosing upon earth as it is bound and loosed in heaven.

"That it is, in this sense, and understood according to this *declaratory* interpretation, the words are used by our own church, a candid comparison of her offices does, I think, make abundantly clear."—*The Author's Lectures on the Church*, pp. 91, 92. Eighth edition.

cussed in inseparable connexion with the duty of the lay-members of the church towards their ministers. The duty of obedience to the ordinances of God is not disputed among the members of the churches of Christ. Concerning the nature of those ordinances, the best mode of their administration, and the gracious benefits or dangerous responsibilities or both to be derived from them, great differences of opinion exist, and might have been reasonably anticipated; but upon the question of obedience itself, wherever it can be shown that God has commanded, there is no difference. All, or nearly all, agree that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted baptism and the Lord's supper; and that consequently it became the duty of his disciples to observe those ordinances.

But another question arises when we approach the ordinances of *man;* because here the sources of authority enjoining the observance being fallible, and therefore in any one particular instance possibly in error; the duty of obedience seems in every instance suspended upon the result of a preliminary inquiry as to whether the thing enjoined be right or wrong. And this seems to imply that all parties have one common standard of reference, in the light of whose permanent authority that inquiry is to be conducted.

Upon the general duty of obedience to the lawfully constituted ministry of the Christian churches, St. Paul's language is plain, "Obey them that have

the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." * And the spirit in which this obedience is to be rendered is beautifully described by the same Apostle in his first epistle to the church of the Thessalonians; "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake." †

Nothing can be more obvious than that these instructions were given to the Christian laity, concerning the first pastors or angels of the churches. Obey your church rulers, and submit yourselves; for they are over you *in the Lord.* Their official authority, in virtue of which they require your obedience, is not arrogated by man, but ordained of God, and therefore submission is inculcated as a matter of conscience towards God.

As a general principle this is felt, and cannot but be felt by all who will yield consistent deference to the Holy Scriptures. By many, however, it is felt to be inconvenient; and the favourite mode of evading it as a divine ordinance, and reducing it to a human compact, is to say, first, that the pastors here spoken of by the Apostle were all men of personal piety, and preachers of scriptural truth; and then, secondly, that obedience to them is enjoined in virtue of their *character* altogether, and not at all in virtue of their office. Thus, restraining

* Heb. xiii. 17. † 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

the precept to such pastors as they are pleased to consider faithful men, and to them, only as long as they continue to give satisfaction to their judges, whose competence to form a sound judgment is quietly taken for granted; they get wholly rid of the constraint of the divine injunction which, by this interpretation and this limitation, they render as nugatory as any of their own maxims; and thereupon find their conscience perfectly at ease while they make free, in word and deed, with bishops, and churches, and ordinances.

It is highly probable that most, if not all, of the first pastors of the churches were men of personal godliness, and preachers of sound doctrines; but it does by no means follow that their character was their entire qualification as pastors. Nay, the very existence of pastors, as distinct from their flocks, proves the contrary; or else it proves that in each church there was but one godly man possessing the gift of speech. For if all, or most of the members, of a church were of that character, and if character, without ordination qualified for the ministry; then all, or most, were ministers, and the distinction disappears. But we have already seen that the distinction is scriptural, and therefore this interpretation of the separatists must disappear. I earnestly disclaim any design, or desire, to depreciate character, or to justify the wicked; far otherwise, but personal character is not my present subject; I am proving the reality and the authority of the pastoral

office. I deny not that this office has been too often entrusted to unfit hands, and abused to the worst of purposes. It has been in such sort abused as to be made the instrument of lust and ambition, of avarice, and injustice, and sloth. But still the office exists, and in those deplorable cases weighs down the wretched renegade who holds it, under its increased responsibilities and aggravated judgments. It will be said that this is to ascribe an *opus operatum* to a mere manual ceremony. But let us not be deterred by hard words. If the *opus* referred to be an increased responsibility, then truly there is an *opus operatum* in the reception of every christian privilege, and of this among the rest. The privilege of instruction in our Lord's will incurs the penalty of *many* stripes if that will be not obeyed. The privilege of christian ordinances transfers a community from the more tolerable condition of Tyre and Sidon, into the more intolerable responsibility of Chorazin and Bethsaida. And the privilege of the christian ministry exposes the unworthy intruder to a deadlier condemnation. This is not merely gathered by general inference, but seems to be the direct and obvious meaning of St. James, where he says in his catholic epistle to the twelve tribes, *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*

But to return to the authority of the ministry of the churches: although, as regards MATTERS OF FAITH, we are bound to look upon ourselves as the

immediate successors of the apostolical churches, and utterly to reject any addition to the Scriptures, or any pretended development which amounts to an addition; yet as regards rites, and ceremonies, and forms of worship, we are not, I conceive, at liberty to look upon ourselves as *immediate* successors of those first churches, as though no ordinance of man had intervened.

This distinction between matters of faith to be believed for salvation, and rites and ceremonies instituted for the preservation of decency and order, is neither fanciful nor arbitrary. It is not a quibble of carnal men, conveniently invented for the propping up of a Babylonish fabric, as it has been rashly represented. It is strictly scriptural. The Bible proclaims its own sufficiency as regards matters of faith. Paul informs Timothy that the holy Scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and adds that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly furnished* unto all good works. (2 Tim. iii. 15—17.) But as regards institutions and ceremonies of order, the Bible proclaims its own insufficiency. The Apostle enjoins upon the brethren to submit themselves to the rulers, which would be worse than useless if the rulers had no authority to command anything beyond the letter of the Scripture. To the Corinthian

church the Apostle says, *Let all things be done decently and in order;* and again he says, *The rest will I set in order when I come;* and to Titus he says, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest* SET IN ORDER THE THINGS THAT ARE WANTING, *and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.* The Scriptures contain no detailed description of how Paul set things in order at Corinth, or Titus in Crete; and the omission was designed that other churches in different circumstances, and ages, and climates, might enjoy christian liberty, while with wisdom and discretion they set things in order for themselves. The reason and the mercy of this are obvious, in a religion which was designed to extend to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west; a religion which was to gather its converts from the most cultivated and the most barbarous of human tribes, and assemble its congregations in every varying latitude from the burning sands of Guyana and Peru to the icebergs on the coast of Norway.

It follows, then, that the Bible was never designed to be a sufficient guide in all the details of management in the churches of Christ. It is all-sufficient in principle. It invests the church rulers with true authority to enter into details; and it binds the members of the church to yield submission to the details so prescribed, though they be not written in the Bible. In no case upon earth is it possible for the ultimate end of legislative authority

to be the immediate director in every detail of the executive. Therefore general orders are indispensable as the groundwork of delegated authority. To THIS INFIRMITY OF HUMAN MANAGEMENT THE LORD HAS CONDESCENDED IN THE HISTORY OF HIS CHURCH. He has employed the instrumentality of human rulers. The rulers are those who in the providence of God have the rule, whatever may be the form of church government. General orders are given in the Bible; delegated authority is entrusted to the rulers of the christian churches; and every regulation, every ceremony decreed by those rulers, (and not contradicted by Scripture,) comes to the mind, and commands the obedience, of a christian churchman upon the ultimate authority of Scripture itself.

To deny this power would be to supersede the use of the ministry, as a standing institution for the preservation of decency and order, since those things which are in the Scriptures left at large, such as the mode, for instance, of celebrating the Lord's supper, the times and places of joint religious worship, &c.,—if these, I say, unspecified points, which *must* be determined by some one, are not to be determined by the ministry of the churches, in each country respectively; one of the purposes for which Jesus Christ instituted this society is defeated; since if she has any authority at all, (which he expressly gave her,) and has none in matters determined in Scripture, she must have

it in things *un*determined in Scripture. . . ." In matters of discipline, the positive institutions of the church *make* things right and wrong which were left undetermined in Scripture, such as the observance of religious festivals, forms of public worship administration of the sacraments and things of that nature. And to disregard the authority of the church in matters of this description, (I mean, of course, in such cases where there is nothing ordained that is against Scripture,) to consider things which were originally indifferent, as indifferent *after* the church has enacted regulations respecting them, is an offence against Christ himself, the head of that body; not so *great* an offence, I allow, as direct rebellion against his own immediate commands; but as *truly* an offence. For Christians should remember that they cannot obey, in many instances, even the express commands of Scripture, unless they comply either with some kind of ecclesiastical discipline, or with some unauthorised devices of their own instead. Our Saviour expressly commands the celebration of the holy communion, and St. Paul the assembling of Christians, for the purpose of prayer and religious exhortation. Now these things must be done in *some* time, place, and form, if the commands are to be obeyed at all; and if each follows his own fancy in these points, there will be divisions among Christians, they will come together not for the better, but for the worse, like the disorderly Corinthians, of whom every one had

a psalm, had an exhortation, had an interpretation, &c., which led to confusion and discord, all which are expressly forbidden in Scripture itself." *

What would be said to the colonel of a regiment, who on receiving certain detailed orders from the general of brigade, replied, I will not obey them; I have here the articles of war, which I received from the commander-in-chief, and they contain no mention of these orders? No. But do they not contain a general order of obedience to your superiors in command, and does not that endorse all these? Equally unreasonable and unscriptural is it in any man to say, I will not conform to such or such a ceremony of the church, because there is no mention made of it in the scripture. He has the Bible in his hand commanding him to obey the rulers of the church; the rulers say, do this, and he replies, No, I will not do it, because it is not specified in the Bible! The soldiers and servants of the gentile centurion shall rise up in the judgment with such a man and shall condemn him. For that centurion was exercising a delegated authority under general orders, and when he gave particular orders to those under him they obeyed him. He said to one, Go, and he went; and to another, Come, and he came; and to his servant, Do this, and he did it. And verily, in the application of this, we may truly say, "A greater than the centurion is here."

Imagine the case of a nobleman's or gentleman's

* *Letters on the Church*, by an Episcopalian, pp. 63—65.

family, wherein there is a large retinue of servants. Two of these servants are, or fancy themselves, converted characters, while all the rest of the family are worldly-minded to an excess. These two are persecuted as spies by their fellow-servants, and despised as canting methodists by their master. If they pray, they must pray by stealth; if they read, they must hide their book the moment any one approaches; if they attend a church where the gospel is preached, they must endure reproach and scorn and scoffing for it; if they go out to enjoy communion with a christian neighbour, they must do it at the risk of losing their places. Well, this they think is quite delightful; the people of God, say they, have been always sufferers: it is refreshing to the spirit to have the high privilege of enduring patiently for righteousness' sake; but woe to the persecuting tyrants who oppress God's dear little ones!

After some time their master becomes a religious character, and *establishes* family worship in his house.

He commands all his servants to assemble at nine o'clock, morning and evening, for reading the scriptures and prayer. Then those two servants say, No! no human authority has a right to dictate to us when we shall pray. Our religion is between ourselves and God; such orders from man are a tyrannical control over the conscience. This is a bigoted, popish family; what! fix nine o'clock every day for prayer, like an ancient pharisee! No, truly, real prayer is spiritual. The kingdom of Christ is not of

this world. Our vital godliness will be compromised by a Babylonish alliance with this family: we will *not* go to family prayer ! ! !

Is not this a counterpart of the objections of many to the ecclesiastical discipline of the Church of England ?* And is it not the secret pride of independ-

* I have said *ecclesiastical* discipline, originating, as it did, and superintended, as it is, by the lawfully appointed officers of the ecclesiastical society. Were it not for the pertinacity with which unproved, and disproved, accusations are unblushingly reiterated; it would be needless to refer to the charge urged by dissenters against the Church of England, that her order and rule, her faith and ordinances are all laid down by the civil powers, that her officers, high and low, are all appointed, and paid, and governed by the state, like the police.

It is almost incredible that the men who continue to advance this charge can continue to think it justly applicable. It is indeed true that lay-members of the society, whether the sovereign, or others, have power to select from among the ordained ministers of the church, those whom they may prefer, to fill certain stations of temporal emolument, combined with opportunities to dispense spiritual instruction. But it is wholly untrue that the civil power, in any, or all, of its branches, can appoint, or compel to the appointment, of any single minister of the church.

It is true that the state may, and ought to, judge of the doctrines which any Christian society has announced its determination to teach; and may give, or withhold, countenance and support to that society, according to the judgment so formed. The English church, as a Christian society, has plainly announced those doctrines which it is her determination to teach. The state may give, or withhold, countenance and support to her while so teaching. But it is grossly untrue to say that the state dictates, or has power to dictate, a single article of her

ence, the instinctive insubordination of the natural heart which lies at the root of such boasted love of spirituality? If you leave me alone to please myself I will do many things. It is a secret gratification

faith. It is true that the civil power governs, and ought to govern, the ministers of the church, in common with all the other subjects of the realm, in things concerning which God has issued no commandment; but it is altogether untrue, that the state governs, or has power to govern, any minister of the Church of England, to act in opposition to the word of God.

Adverting historically to its commencement, I have already thus described the connexion between the church and state;—the christian church, considered as a society, including many subjects of the realm; and the state, considered as the civil ruler over the whole realm.

"The christian society, constituted as we have seen, supplied an instrumentality for the conversion to the faith of the Gospel, or at least to a profession of that faith, not of subjects only, but of sovereigns also. God is no respecter of persons, or ranks, on either side. True it is, indeed, that from reasons connected with the pride of human intellect, with the possessions, honours, and consequent entanglements of this world; not many wise men of the flesh, not many rich, not many noble, received the testimony of the Gospel to the saving of their souls: still there were some, some at the very outset, in Cæsar's household; and the instrumentality which reached and subdued them, was powerful, in God's good time, to reach and subdue their imperial Master. No sovereign, so reached and brought personally under christian influence, could be blind to the efficiency of such an instrumentality, or insensible to the weight of responsibility devolving upon himself, with regard to the use he should make, or at the least endeavour to make of it, on behalf of his people. Becoming personally a member of Christ's church, he became responsible not only for the performance of his *quondam*

to me to be the originating source of my own actions, it flatters my self-importance; but if any human authority command me to do it, so that in doing it I must practise submission, and acknowledge my own comparative littleness, then I won't do it; when man orders it, it ceases to be religion, for there is no respect of persons with God!

If there be ridicule in this illustration, it is not

duties as a sovereign, from new principles; but also for the performance of *new duties* as a christian sovereign, providentially placed in a condition to avail himself of a new christian instrumentality.

"Accordingly, where the Christian society extended itself so as to reach the throne as well as the cottage, kings and princes availed themselves of the officers and ordinances of the church; they did not attempt to create other officers, or impose other ordinances, but using what they found already in operation, they made God's instruments for eternal salvation to be at the same time, and by the same means, their instruments for national civilization, subordination, and peace. The rulers of this world require such instrumentality; because their subjects are *men*, intelligent, responsible, immortal creatures, who cannot be properly managed in time—possessing and not abusing liberty—unless they are under instruction for eternity. And the ministers of the Christian church rejoice in being so employed, because they are thereby enabled to enlarge the sphere of their gracious labours, carrying the name and truth of their heavenly Master into every nook and corner of their earthly Master's dominions.

"It is as means toward the attainment of that end, as scaffolding towards the erection of that building, and not for their own sakes, that we supremely value our own nationally established opportunities."—*Lectures on the Church*, pp. 120, 121.

used in a spirit of mockery; but as a lawful, because a scriptural weapon, when used in seriousness of reproof.

It may be profitable here to advert briefly to the difference, in point of sanction, between the authority of the ministry of the church, and the authority of the civil magistrate. They are both "*powers that be*," they are both therefore binding upon the consciences of christian men. But in the case of the one there is a judge, and a gaol, and a scaffold; in the case of the other, there is (and ought to be) nothing of this kind. The church with all her discipline, even if maintained unto excommunication, may be despised with *present* impunity. The magistrate may not be so despised. If the fear of God were upon men, they would respect the authority of the rulers of the church as much as those of the state; for both are ordained of God, and obedience to both is commanded in the word of God. But the weapons of the church's warfare are not carnal. Like her divine Head, she is in the world, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (St. Luke ix. 54—56.) So far as she imbibes his spirit, toleration is her preference: and so far as she follows his example, toleration is her practice. The Church of Rome did indeed discard toleration both in theory and practice. And in every age, fanaticism, verifying the adage, that extremes meet, has discarded it in theory; her practice being restrained apparently only by her impotence, or by some lingering though reluctant defer-

ence to public opinion, which she is not able wholly to shake off, except occasionally during violent paroxysms of her excitement, when she forgets her policy in the sincerity of her madness. But the Lord is long-suffering, and "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* All that we can do as christian churchmen, is to teach and persuade and warn them, that now is the appointed time, now the day of salvation: "that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night—that when they shall say 'peace and safety,' then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;"† one precept of which is, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

Here, as a matter of course, I anticipate a recoil in the mind of the reader, and more particularly of that class of readers for whose instruction this is specially designed. What! it will be asked—as if the question itself contained a triumphant refutation of the doctrine here advocated—what! is absolute submission to human authority the scriptural duty of every christian man? And is there no limit? Why, this is the exploded bigotry of the dark ages, divine

* Eccl. viii. 11. † 1 Thess. v.; 2 Thess. i.

right and passive obedience! According to this, the Reformation was an unjustifiable schism, our Revolution was a rebellion against God!

Many persons think so. I do not think so, and I proceed now to assign my reasons.

IV. What is the scriptural limit set to the authority of the ruler, whether civil or ecclesiastical, in imposing ordinances upon christian men?

There is a limit, and that limit is the Bible itself. The christian authority of the ruler is derived from parts of the Bible; when, therefore, the ruler enacts any law, or decrees any ceremony which is *contrary* to other parts of the Bible, *he arraigns his own charter*. He can no longer claim the authority of Scripture as the basis of his own authority, and of course it ceases to be a scriptural duty to obey him. But so long as the laws and ceremonies introduced by the ruler are confined to matters which the Bible has left undetermined, or wholly unnoticed, they are to be obeyed for conscience sake, by all christian men.

Suppose a father to entrust his sons to the care of a tutor, giving at the same time, to both them and the tutor, a written list of directions for the regulation of their lives; suppose the list to consist of one hundred items, one of which is, *obey your tutor;* and suppose also the letter to contain an address from the father to the tutor, saying, teach these children in my name, and in accordance with my written in-

structions given to you and to them. The children, thus supplied with a letter of infallible directions and a living fallible guide invested with authority to give them additional directions, would be in a condition resembling that of the christian laity. When the tutor issued a command, those children, if wise and dutiful, would first examine whether their tutor's command *contradicted* any of the remaining ninety-and-nine instructions of their father. If it did not, they would say, we are bound for conscience sake to our father, to obey this. His letter fully warrants our tutor to require such obedience. But if their tutor's command did contradict any of the instructions in their father's letter; then they would say, our tutor has forgotten his proper place, he has no authority over us except what he derives from this letter; now he is going against the letter, and therefore, for conscience sake to our father, we must refuse to obey him.

" A great difference is here to be made between those rules that both church and state ought to set to themselves in their enacting of such matters, and the measures of the obedience of subjects. The only question, in the point of obedience, must be LAWFUL or UNLAWFUL. For *expedient* or *inexpedient* ought never to be brought into question as to the point of obedience; since, no inexpediency whatsoever can balance the breaking of order and the dissolving the constitution and society.

" But those in whose hands the making of those rules is put, ought to carry their thought much far-

ther: *they ought to consider well the genius of the christian religion.*"

"Yet in this matter no certain or mathematical rules can be given. Every person concerned in the management of this authority, must act as he will answer it to God, and to the church; for he must be at liberty in applying general rules to particular times and cases." And a temper must be observed: *we must avoid a sullen adhering to things because they were once settled;* as if points of honour were to be maintained here.

"Now, since there is not any one thing that Christ has enjoined more solemnly and more frequently than love and charity, union and agreement amongst his disciples; since we are also required to assemble ourselves together, to constitute ourselves in a body, both for worshipping God jointly, and for maintaining order and love among the society of Christians; we ought to acquiesce in such rules as have been agreed upon by common consent, and which are recommended to us by long practice, and that are established by those who have the lawful authority over us. Nor can we assign any other bounds to our submission in this case than those that the gospel has limited. We must obey God rather than man, and we must in the first place render to God the things that are God's, and then give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. So that if either church or state have power to make rules and laws in such matters, they must have this extent given them, that till they break in upon the laws of

God and the gospel, we must be bound to obey them. A mean cannot be put here: either they have no power at all, or they have a power that must go to every thing that is not forbidden by any law of God. This is the only measure that can be given in this matter."*

* *Burnet* on the Articles. Art. xx.

To the smaller matters which have led to recent dissentions and divisions among ourselves, these principles apply in full force.

The difference between what our episcopal reformers, the rulers of our church for the time then being, *composed*, and what they *compiled*, is plain enough, and natural enough. They composed the Articles, and the Articles are consistent as a whole; distinct also, and emphatic; requiring not evasion only, but avowedly a "non-natural" treatment, to reconcile them to Roman doctrine.

But they compiled the Rubricks, mutilating some, and enlarging some: their successors made changes in their work, and their successors made further changes and restorations; till upon the whole the voice of rubrical authority among us is a doubtful voice; and there does not appear to exist any living authority to divest it of that doubtfulness, so as to make it say, clearly and decidedly, the same thing to us all.

This was seen and known for years, and yet peace and harmony reigned practically among us. Usage, sanctioned by authority, became authority itself; and now innovation seeks in vain to justify itself by pleading that the letter of *some* rubricks is on its side. Is not this a fair statement of the case? For where lay, or in what consisted, our ecclesiastical authority in such matters for the last century and half? Not surely in one or two rubricks, detached from the rest, still less in inferences drawn from rubricks. But in what did it consist? Did not the continued sanction of all the bishops, to a practice of almost all the clergy, and that through a series of so many years, amount to an autho-

The authority entrusted to the ministers of the church, whether contemporaneous with, or in succession to, the Apostles, was not at any time to entrench upon the faith which the Apostles taught

rity? And who are justly chargeable with the first disturbing exercise of private judgment, but they who, without authority, and as individuals, broke in upon the catholic practice of the church? This was the more mischievous, because the persons who were guilty of it were fully aware from the first, that it would inevitably lead to division; and that when the divisions came, there existed no competent authority to decide between the disputants and reduce all to unanimity again.

An observation of Archbishop Secker, concerning the prayer before the sermon, might with advantage be applied to many other things. He says, "The original manner of performing this part of the preacher's office was by 'bidding,' that is, inviting and exhorting the people to pray for the several particulars mentioned by him, which they were understood to do, either silently in their minds as they went along with him, or by comprehending them all in the Lord's prayer at last. But in process of time, some imagined it better to put the whole into the shape of a direct address: others followed their example, as thinking it a matter of indifference: but most have kept to the old way. And *the intention being the same, neither custom should give offence.*" —*Abp. Secker,* apud "*Mant on the Prayer book.*" Art. Com.

The same may be said of a valuable observation of Bishop Mant on the subject of the Homilies. In his commentary on the book of Common Prayer, (Art. Communion,) his lordship says,

"The English language has changed so much since those Homilies were written, that they would scarcely now be understood by a common congregation, and therefore the reading of them publicly, *as it would no longer answer any good purpose, has fallen into general disuse, with the tacit consent of the governing part of the church.*"

Where these "unhappy divisions" have been most painfully

either in the way of adding to, or taking from, or in any degree altering the gospel which they preached. Some among their contemporaries attempted this at the outset, and their partial success in perverting the minds of certain of the brethren in Galatia, led to this noble declaration of the complete perfection, in matters of faith, of the Apostles' preaching. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that

manifested, the lay members of the church have resented the innovations. They have refused to submit to them. But would it be just or fair, to accuse them, on that account, of resistance against lawful authority? Surely not. They are the upholders of the best authority we have in these matters; viz. long established usage. Instead of acting on an unauthorised exercise of private judgment, they have opposed themselves to those who were so acting, and have thereby entitled themselves to the grateful thanks of all who are conscientiously attached to catholicity of practice in our church.

The case would be different, had the changes in question been enjoined by competent authority. And if such authority existed, if we had a convocation regularly and constitutionally convened and if after due deliberation by such a body, the changes referred to, or any other changes, not involving any opposition to "God's word written," were pronounced to be the right practices of the church in this realm, from this time forth; the same persons who have been forward to resist them as unauthorised innovations, would upon the same principle, if they acted consistently, dutifully comply with them, as laws duly enacted: although they might regret the enactment as injudicious in itself, and manifesting, in their rulers, a lamentable lack of what Bishop Burnet called "a due consideration of the genius of the christian religion," and described as an important duty of those "in whose hands the making of rules is put."

called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again: If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 6—9.)

But—it will be retorted again—this, after all, is to make us the judges? In this one point, undoubtedly, it is. And to this end is the Bible put into our hands, not as an all-sufficient guide to supersede a living voice, a delegated authority, and a discretionary power; but as a rectifier, and infallible standard, in *opposition* to which christian governors ought not to command, nor christian men to obey. Upon this one point, whether a law or ceremony is, or is not, contradictory to the Bible, let every man judge dispassionately, and decide at his peril in the sight of God. But let no man imagine that he has any scriptural right to disobey a law of the state, or disregard a ceremony of the church, (however he may personally dislike it, or however inexpedient, or absurd, or vexatious, he may consider it,) merely because there is nothing concerning it in the Bible. On the contrary, if there be nothing concerning it in the Bible, then it is clear it cannot be contradictory to the Bible; and, in that case, the enactment of the ruler gives it the authority of the Bible itself.

Surely then I may anticipate agreement in the conclusion that the common cry against many of the ceremonies of our own church, "Where do we find them in the Bible?" is altogether unworthy of a place in the disputations of christian men of enlarged and enlightened minds. The question is not, Are these ceremonies prescribed in the Bible? But are they contradictory to the Bible? It is not, Have the rulers authority to enact? But, have they transgressed the scriptural limits of their authority?

The rulers of the Romish system did so transgress. They enacted, not only things indifferent, things injudicious and inexpedient, (had they stopped there, they ought still to have been obeyed,) but they proceeded to enact things *unlawful;* things indirect, palpable, and even verbal contradiction to Holy Scripture. They enacted, for example, the perpetual repetition of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, as a propitiation for the sins of the quick and dead; while the Scripture declares that sacrifice to have been offered once, and only once, "once for all," εφαπαξ. (Heb. x. 10.) They enacted the bowing down before images, (in this point of view, it matters nothing whether there be worship, or what species or degree of worship in their bowing down,) while the Scripture says, "Ye shall not bow down unto them." They enacted encroachments on the secular power, even to the virtual assumption, and in many flagrant instances, the actual exercise of complete temporal dominion, "*Imperatores Pontifi-*

cibus debent subesse non præesse," was the demand of St. Peter's successor, (?) although the plain injunction of St. Peter himself to both ministers and members of the christian church is submission to the king as supreme, and unto governors as sent by him. (1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.)

Many other such things did they enact in direct hostility to the word of God. They unchristianized themselves. The christian course under such circumstances was to stand fast at the line of separation between *indifferent* and *unlawful* enactments; to persevere in obedience to the former, for conscience sake; and resolutely to disobey the latter, for the same conscience sake. To submit to the unlawful enactment was apostacy. To reject alike the indifferent and the unlawful was schismatic petulance. To discriminate between them, retaining allegiance to the one, as the lawful exercise of delegated authority; and resisting the other as the unlawful excess of the same; this was christian wisdom. And this is a brief, but correct, statement of the principle on which both our reformation and revolution were effected.

V. But because this ministry, or church government, appointed by God, appeals to persons as its subjects, who are at the same time subjects of the state; and because it requires of the members of the churches duties which may, or may not, be in harmony with the duties prescribed to them by the

civil ruler; it is necessary, for clearness sake, in a scriptural exposition of this matter, to advert further to the source, extent, and limitation of the authority of the civil power; to the duty also of that power with reference to God's truth as revealed in the Scripture, and God's society as consisting of subjects of the realm.

The language of St. Paul concerning the authority of the civil magistrate, and the submission thereto of the members of the churches of Christ, is familiar. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same, for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." (Rom. xiii. 1—5.)

This is precise as regards the civil ruler. The power which he possesses is not arrogated of man, but ordained of God; and therefore submission is inculcated not merely to avoid the wrath of man,

but also as a matter of conscience towards God. The Apostle Peter, in like manner, combines the subject with the Christian upon the only principle which can make loyalty a religious duty. He says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." And in speaking of the unjust, whom God reserves unto the day of judgment to be punished, he thus describes them, in words which maintain a closer connexion between religion and politics, than it accords with the temper of these times to admit. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly," among the various classes of the unjust, who are all put in contradistinction to the godly, "them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. (1 Peter ii. 13, 14; 2 Peter ii. 9, 10.)

The apostolical description of the ruling power, as the minister of God, a terror not to good works but to the evil, applies to the ordinance itself, and not to the personal character of the individual man or men by whom the ordinance is administered. When the Apostles gave these instructions to the christian church, the administration of the ordinance of

government was in the hands of the Emperor Nero, who, personally considered, was a terror to the good rather than to the evil. And the simple fact of the Apostles having so written, while under such a monarch, supplies of itself a very striking proof that the distinction between an ordinance of God as such, and the character of the human instrumentality by which that ordinance is from time to time administered, is not a cunningly devised fiction, but an essential truth.

" The sovereignty," says Bishop Horsley, " particularly intended in the immediate application of the precept to those to whom the epistle was addressed, was the sovereign authority of the Roman emperor. Nero was at the time the possessor of that sovereignty; and the Apostle, in what he immediately subjoins to enforce his precept, seems to obviate an objection which he was well aware the example of Nero's tyranny might suggest. His reasoning is to this effect,—' The sovereignty,' you will say, ' is often placed in unfit hands, and abused to the worst purposes. It is placed in the hands of sensual, rapacious men, of capricious women, and of ill-conditioned boys. It is in such sort abused, as to be made the instrument of lust and ambition, of avarice and injustice. You yourselves, my brethren, experience the abuse of it in your own persons. It may seem to you that power, derived from the Author of all good, could never be so misplaced, nor be permitted to be so misused; and you may per-

haps be ready to conclude, that the father of lies once, at least, spake truth when he claimed the disposal of earthly sceptres as his own prerogative. Such reasonings, saith the Apostle, are erroneous. No king, however he might use, or abuse, authority, ever reigned but by the appointment of God's providence. There is no such thing as power but from God. To Him whatever powers, good or bad, are at any time subsisting in the world, are subordinate. He has good ends of his own, not always to be foreseen by us, to be effected by the abuse of power, as by other partial evils; and to his own secret purpose he directs the worst actions of tyrants, no less than the best of godly princes. Man's abuse, therefore, of his delegated authority is to be borne with resignation like any other of God's judgments. The opposition of the individual to the sovereign power is an opposition to God's providential arrangements; and it is the more inexcusable, because the well-being of mankind is the general end for which government is ordained, and this end of government under all its abuses is generally answered by it. For the good of government is perpetual and universal; the mischiefs resulting from the abuse of power, temporary and partial. Insomuch that in governments which are the worst administered, the sovereign power is, for the most part, a terror, not to good works, but to the evil; and upon the whole, far more beneficial than detrimental to the subject. But this general good of

government cannot be secured upon other terms than the submission of the individual to what may be called its extraordinary evils."*

To apply this argument to our country: the providential rulers of our state, that is to say, the king, lords, and commons in parliament assembled, have enacted a great variety of laws. As subjects we are bound to yield obedience, under the sanction of temporal penalties. But by what scriptural authority is it, that we are called upon to obey an act of parliament? There are no acts of parliament in the Bible. They all rest upon human authority. Obedience we see is indispensable on pain of present suffering in body or estate; but is there any *scriptural* ground for such obedience? Is there any *religion* in submission? Am I at liberty to say, "As a Christian I have nothing to do with carnal elements? Christianity is between me and my God? The commandments of men, though binding upon my person and property as a citizen, cannot have any weight upon my conscience?

No, truly; as a Christian you have no such liberty; for hear what the Apostle says, *Ye must be subject, not only for wrath;* not only for personal safety from temporal penalties, not only for social or political expediency, *but also for conscience sake.* A man's conscience is open only unto God; yet we see here, that every Christian is bound to obey the commandments of men in authority for conscience

* *Horsley, Sermon* on Rom. xiii. 1.

sake. Why? Because God, in his providence, has appointed the ruler, whatever the form of government may be, and God in his word has said, "obey the ruler."

But this requires further explanation. When the ruler is an individual, invested, in the providence of God, with absolute power, for the use of which he is responsible only to God; then the limit of rightful authority and christian obedience, has reference only to the law of God. There is no other check. It is only when such a ruler commands what God has forbidden, or forbids what God has commanded, that christian subjects can, without sin, refuse to yield obedience. In such a case, the things that are Cæsar's include everything short of this, and it is the duty of the members of Christ's church to obey; remembering that Cæsar's power is ordained of God. This is the simplest case of all. This was the position of the members of the church of God under Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. They were obedient up to the point where the law of God interposed; and that point is illustrated by the history of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the furnace, and of Daniel in the den of lions. This was the position of the primitive Christians under Nero, as we have seen. Christians, under such a Cæsar, were often required to do what, considered in itself, it would have been much better not to do; but being in Divine Providence so politically situated, they had no choice. They naturally, how-

ever, desired a change in their political position; they desired a different kind of Cæsar, under whom such things could not be lawfully required; they longed for some check upon the will of their absolute ruler in matters not specifically provided for in the revealed law of God. Such desires were not wrong, neither was it wrong to aim, in a peaceable way, at their attainment, *because the Bible nowhere prescribes that every christian government should be absolute.*

"It is true that in the world, taken as it now is, and hath been for many ages, cases happen in which the sovereign power is conferred by the act of the people, and in which that act alone can give the sovereign a just title. Not only in elective monarchies, upon the natural demise of the reigning prince, is the successor raised to the throne by the suffrages of the people; but in governments of whatever denomination, if the form of government undergo a change, or the established rule of succession be set aside by any violent or necessary revolution; the act of the nation itself is necessary to erect a new sovereignty, to transfer the old right to the new possessor." . . . . "But it is no just inference that the obligation upon the private citizen to submit himself to the authority thus raised, arises wholly from the act of the people conferring it; or from their compact with the person upon whom it is conferred. In all these cases, the act of the people is only the means which Providence employs

to advance the new sovereign to his station. The obligation of obedience proceeds secondarily only from the act of men; but primarily from the will of God, who has appointed civil life for man's condition, and requires the citizen's submission to the sovereign whom his providence shall, by whatever means, set over him." *

I am well aware how readily and plausibly, and yet, for the most part, how very unreasonably, an *argumentum ad hominem* is got up, and the testimony of such a man as Horsley evaded, by an unworthy sneer at his interested motives, or the prejudices of his high church and monarchical education. But so far as great names are concerned, similar sentiments upon this subject have been left upon record by Milton, Calvin,† and others; men

* *Horsley* on Rom. xiii. 1.

† "Quasi vero Deus non ita regat populum, ut cui Deus vult, regnum tradat populus."

Milton. Def. pro. pop. Angl.

"Ratio cur debeamus subjecti esse magistratibus, quod Dei ordinatione sunt constituti. Quod, si ita placet Domino mundum gubernare; Dei ordinem invertere nititur, adeoque Deo ipsi resistit, quisquis potestatem aspernatur; quando, ejus, qui juris politici auctor est, providentiam contemnere, bellum cum eo suscipere est." *Calvin in Rom.* xiii.

"Si in Dei verbum respicimus, longius nos educet; et non eorum modo principum imperio subditi simus, qui probe, et quâ debent fide, munero suo erga nos defunguntur; sed omnium, qui *quoquo modo* rerum potiuntur, etiamsi nihil minus præstent, quam quod ex officio erat principum.

of no ordinary minds, and certainly of very different associations and prejudices from Horsley. The question, indeed, is not to be decided by authority, but by the weight of sound reason. The reasoning, however, which has the combined suffrages of such men, is not to be set aside by any flippant sneer at divine right, or any unproved assertions, however palatable to the natural insubordination of the human mind. Here, then, is the scriptural key. The rulers have commanded and forbidden a variety of particulars; and this key locks all such enactments, as imperative upon the conscience of christian men, because the one statement, "the powers that be are ordained of God," and the one precept, "be subject for conscience sake," as they imply an authority in the power to make one law, and impose a duty upon the Christian to obey that law; so they sanction the authority of a thousand laws.

Thus it appears, and the conclusion is of no small consequence, that in reference to our duty as christian subjects the Bible is not a sufficient guide in details. It was never designed to be so. It is

In eo probando insistamus magis, quod non ita facile in hominum mentes cadit; in homine deterrimo, honorique omni indignissimo, penes quem modo sit publica potestas, præclaram illam et divinam potestatem residere, quam Dominus justiciæ ac judicii sui ministris, verbo suo detulit: proinde a subditis eadem in reverentiâ et dignitate habendum, quantum ad publicam obedientiam attinet, qua optimum regem, si daretur, habituri essent."—*Calvin, Inst.* iv. 20, 25.

all-sufficient in principle. It invests the living ruler with authority as the minister of God upon earth to command details; and it binds the Christian subject to obey the details so commanded, although they be not specified in the Bible. It appears also that there is true religion in such obedience, and that there would be irreligion, as well as rebellion, in disobedience;* for all true christian subjects, "knowing whose authority their rulers have, do faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey them in Christ, and for Christ," the divine Head of all constituted authority.

But we have now to consider the case of a limited and complicated sovereignty. When Cæsar is not an absolute individual, but an arrangement made by mutual consent, and consolidated into law; the limit of rightful authority and christian obedience has reference to that human code, as well as to the divine law. Under such circumstances occasions may arise when it may be right for the Christian to refuse obedience, although the thing demanded of him may have no direct or obvious connexion with the law of God. It is enough in such case if the required act of obedience be opposed in anything to the human compact. This is the case in our own favoured nation. Our Cæsar is a complicated arrangement consolidated into law. The sovereign, considered as an individual, is not our Cæsar; the

* See 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.

hereditary branch of the legislature considered in itself is not our Cæsar; the representative branch of the legislature considered in itself is not our Cæsar; the electoral constituencies, who periodically select those representatives, are not our Cæsar. But all these taken together, and considered in their mutual relations as established by the laws, constitute our Cæsar; and each is involved in certain duties to all the rest.

The sovereign to whom is entrusted the execution of the laws, is in duty bound to execute those laws and no other; and the nation in all departments is in duty bound to willing submission and cordial co-operation with the executive. But should the sovereign attempt to suspend any of those laws, or to execute any different laws, the people are not bound to submit, although the matter in question may have no direct bearing upon the law of God. Our position therefore is essentially different from that of the primitive Christians under the Roman emperors; and the contrast is highly instructive. Nero was absolute: in himself alone and without human restriction, he was the Cæsar; his will was law, his word was life or death. It pleased God to allow it to be so; and therefore, the members of the church of God could not properly refuse to obey Nero, unless he directly interfered with the law of God. However vexatious or oppressive his commands might have been in secular matters, Christians were bound to obey, because it is better to endure

vexation and oppression than to die; but if he commanded them to disobey God, then they were bound to refuse, because it is better to die than to disobey God. The sovereign of England is not absolute. He is only one of the constituent parts of the English Cæsar, and if he attempt to act as if he were absolute, without reference to the other parts, it ceases to be a christian duty to obey him; upon the contrary, it becomes a christian duty to disobey him, and to maintain the balanced character of our Cæsar even at the extreme cost of rejecting the sovereign altogether. This is the hinge of our glorious revolution.

James the Second attempted absolutism. Had he been indeed absolute, as Nero was under Divine Providence, obedience would have been a christian duty in every thing short of a violation of the divine law; and when he commanded such a violation, christian duty would have been disobedience, and passive submission to the consequences however extremely calamitous. But he was not absolute. He was indeed a king by Divine Providence, but by the same Providence he was a king consenting to a legal compact with his people: he was not in himself England's Cæsar, but only a constituent part of it. And this made an essential difference. He was the branch of our Cæsar to whom was entrusted the execution of the laws, but instead of fulfilling his trust, he acted in violation of it, against the laws. It was no christian duty to submit: on the contrary, it was

a christian duty to refuse to submit, as the six bishops did; and not only so, but it was a christian duty to maintain the balanced character of our Cæsar even at the cost of rejecting and deposing the sovereign. And this was the good service to the country, performed by those men who invited the aid and accomplished the accession of the Prince of Orange.

The will of our component Cæsar is expressed in law, and with us *law is absolute.* If, therefore, the members of the christian church in England would obey our Saviour, and "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," they must be obedient, willingly so, to the laws; they must be co operative, cordially so, in maintaining the efficiency and supremacy of the laws. They must not only refrain from any breach of the laws themselves, but they must never connive at any such breach in another. It is not enough to be passively harmless in this matter, they must be active to prevent harm. When cognizant of an offence they must never shrink from giving the needful information to the proper authorities. This is a branch of christian duty, for the performance of which no ordinary courage is required; because, through an unhappy perversion of liberty and morality, the character of an informer has become as generally odious as the character of the offender, and among certain classes of the community much more odious; but Christians must remember that men who will not co-operate to support the laws when violated against

others, do not deserve the protection of those laws when violated against themselves. They must remember also, that in the Scriptures, not the thief only is condemned, but the man also who saw him and consented with him; and therefore they will not hesitate to inform against the violaters of the laws when they become acquainted, in a providential, or as men speak, accidental way, with their offences. I need scarcely add that this is essentially different from the complicated treachery of becoming spies first, hypocrites in crime, aud then informers, not for righteousness' sake, but for the wages of unrighteousness.

Considering magistrates as the manifold arms of the sovereign for carrying the laws into execution, what is all this but an expansion of the Apostle's language, "Put them in mind to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work?" I will only add upon this point, that this subjection to the civil power is as truly binding upon the ministers of the christian church as it is upon the people. The laws of England, both the common law and the statute law, utterly reject the arrogant claim of the papal clergy to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the civil courts.

VI. This abstract would be very incomplete if confined to a statement of the duties of Christians considered as subjects under the law. Another question of deep interest arises with regard to chris-

tian duty in making or altering the laws; and also in the selection of such representatives as shall be from time to time invested with the power of making or altering the laws. Upon this point the christian duty of rulers demands our attention, and in considering this we are engaged in a discussion which, as will appear in the sequel, is much more largely practical than is commonly supposed.

It is in practical matters affecting present duty—matters concerning which God has spoken plainly, but public opinion has not spoken, or at least not with any emphasis of demand, and still more in matters concerning which public opinion has spoken loudly on the other side—that the real allegiance or disaffection of a man's mind towards the revealed will and authority of God, is truly tested.

In the matter now to be considered, what hath God spoken? Let an inspired king give answer. "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me; he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."*

Here it is plainly declared by "Him from whom all power is derived," that all rulers among men should not only be religious men, living as immortal individuals in the fear of God; but also religious rulers, exercising their official authority religiously, "ruling," as well as living, in the fear of God. This, as a general principle, is of the first importance, condemning as it does, on the express authority of

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

holy scripture, those who maintain, that although all men of every station should be religious, considered in their individual capacity as heirs of immortality; yet that rulers, as rulers over the affairs of this world, have no concern with, and no province in, religion.*

In England, the rulers are very numerous, and the discharge of their official duties demands from them, in many instances, considerations of religion. The church of England so instructs her members; and, tracing all authority to its true source, she invites them to unite in prayer to God, "for kings, and for all who are in authority."†

* Dr. Wardlaw has put and answered the question, "What is the magistrate's province in regard to religion? His true and legitimate province is to have no province at all." Yet strangely enough the doctor adds, "*As a man*, he is bound to believe the truths, and obey the precepts, of the word of God; *as a magistrate*, he is bound to fulfil all his official functions on christian principles, from christian motives, and according to christian precepts; as every man is, in every condition and every relation of life; but *authority* in religion he has none." *Lectures on Establishments*, p. 191.

Upon this I ask how the performance of his "official functions," "as a magistrate," is to be separated from his "authority?" And if his official functions, thus inseparable from his magisterial authority—which is, in truth, the meaning of official—are to be performed on christian principles, from christian motives, and according to christian precepts; how is his official authority to be kept wholly separate from his Christianity? And how is he in his official functions—i. e. as a magistrate—to have no province in religion? *Lectures on the Church*, pp. 187, 188.

† 1 Tim. ii. 1—3.

Elementary as the subject may seem, and thereupon, to some minds, comparatively insignificant, I have no doubt of the real usefulness of a brief review of the question, Who are the rulers in England? as well as, What is their duty?

The simplest form of government among men, is an absolute monarchy. If the monarch were perfect, this would be perfect. There would be no risk of abuse of power, and therefore no need for any limitation of power. There would be no risk of any lack of wisdom, and therefore no occasion to multiply counsellors. It is such a government we are taught, by the sure word of prophecy, to anticipate, when He, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness, shall take to himself his great power and reign over a renewed earth wherein righteousness shall dwell.

But under monarchs, themselves fallen sinful creatures, this perfection is not to be had, is not to be expected. There *is* risk of abuse, and therefore need for limitation: risk of mistake, and therefore occasion for counsel. The modes of meeting this necessity, and adjusting the conflicting claims for the general good, are various; that is, there are various modes of distributing power among different individuals in a nation, and for different periods of time. But in whatever measure, or for whatever period, power is distributed; the persons exercising

it are, in their degree and time, rulers; and, as Christians, are bound *to rule in the fear of God.*

In this realm the chief ruler, and for life, is the sovereign — supported by the hereditary peerage, who are also rulers for life,—and that this branch of the rule may be conducted in the fear of God, the church of England instructs all her members to pray for divine grace on the sacred head and heart of the monarch, that "knowing whose minister he is, he may, above all things, seek God's honour and glory."* But, secondly, our sovereign rules by the

* That the nation may have a public guarantee for this, on which christian men may confide in all the enthusiasm of allegiance, the following questions are put, and answers given, on the day of each coronation.

I quote from Blackstone, Com. b. i. c. 6.

"*The Archbishop or Bishop shall say,*—Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the people of this kingdom of England, and the dominions thereto belonging, according to the statutes in parliament agreed on, and the laws and customs of the same?

"*The King or Queen shall say*—I solemnly promise so to do.

"*Archbishop or Bishop*—Will you to the utmost of your power cause law and justice, in mercy, to be executed in all your judgments?

"*King or Queen*—I will.

"*Archbishop or Bishop*—Will you, to the utmost of your power, maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion established by law?

"*King or Queen*—All this I promise to do.

"After this, the king or queen, laying his or her hand upon the holy Gospels, shall say,—The things which I have here

instrumentality of responsible advisers; and that they may advise, and carry out the advice they give, that is, execute their part of the rule in the fear of God; the church prays for "the lords of the council and all the nobility, that they may have grace, wisdom, and understanding." Thirdly, these lords of the council rule—that is, hold their places of authority as advisers of the sovereign, according to the decisions of parliament. These decisions are come to by majorities after free debate; and that these majorities may decide religiously, or "rule in the fear of God," the church continues her prayer to God, that it may please him to "direct and prosper all their consultations to the advancement of his glory." One step more, fourthly, parliamentary majorities depend upon the selections of representatives made by the voters among the people. This is the appeal, in the last resort, for the rule of the kingdom; and christian men of every rank and station ought to make conscience of answering it "in the fear of God." Every voter, at every election, is, during his appointed time, and according to his appointed measure, a ruler, and every christian voter

before promised, I will perform and keep, so help me God; and then shall kiss the book."

On this Mr. Christian, the editor of Blackstone, has a note thus:

"And it is required both by the Bill of Rights, 1 W. & M., st. 2, c. 2, and the Act of Settlement, 12 & 13 Wm. iii., c. 2, that every king and queen shall repeat and subscribe the declaration against popery according to the 30 Car. ii. st. 2, c. 1."

who has learned from the scriptures, what it is the high office of the church to teach, that whatsoever he does in word or deed, he should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; will not allow his conduct at the polling booth to be an exception to his christian life, but will endeavour to the best of his wisdom and knowledge, to give his vote in the fear of God. To do so with intelligence, he must have regard both to the revealed will of God, which is unchangeable; and to the balanced order of things in the realm, which has been found to work well upon the whole, and which ought not to be fundamentally changed without very urgent necessity.

Referring to the former: in the details of religious doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline, there may exist differences which it is difficult for the most conscientious to adjust, which, I may perhaps say with truth, it is utterly impracticable to reduce to uniformity; and if the candidates for our parliamentary suffrages were all men of avowed godliness, agreeing in every fundamental truth substantially scriptural and christian, and differing only where conscientious Christians may differ: if they were all men who, in the language of St. Paul, "*hold the head*," repudiating every species of idolatry, and blasphemy, and infidelity, and maintaining openly and honestly that rulers should not only live as individuals, but rule as rulers in the fear of God; *then* the duty of voters would be simplified, *then* private, personal preferences might be lawfully indulged, because, whoever

was elected, the main points are secure. But if the candidates for our suffrages differ on the most vital matters, if some of them do not "hold the head," do not acknowledge Jesus Christ to be God over all, neither bow down nor worship him; and if some of them bow down to an image of him, and to divers other images in direct defiance of God's most holy law; if some others of them, rejecting these extremes of anti-christianity and professing themselves members of a christian church, avowing also, that as private individuals, they are bound to live in the fear of God, do, nevertheless, as rulers, in their official capacity, sink their Christianity, and make common cause and common companionship with Socinians and Romanists; how then can we delegate power to such? How can we exercise our part of the rule of the country in the fear of God, if we do an act tending to constitute such men our representatives?

With reference to the balanced order of things in the realm also, although the standard is not so precise, there are general principles sufficiently known and tried, which should be held sacred: a substantial prerogative, for example, on the part of the crown, to guard against all encroachments of democracy; and well-defined privileges on the part of the people of all ranks, to guard against all encroachments of tyranny or oppression. On many matters of detail affecting the anticipated improvement, or apprehended injury, to the working of this balance, there may be differences of opinion amongst honest and

conscientious supporters of the British constitution as it is; and if the candidates for our suffrages differed only on such details, all being real friends of the fundamental principles of well-balanced government, *then* there would be comparatively little ground of preference for one above the other; for whoever was elected, the British constitution in its foundations would be safe. But if some candidates present themselves of whom we know that they desire and aim at a new *charter*, which would give a general election every year, and a vote to every man, and a dark ballot mask to every voter—thus destroying our balance and our peace; and if other candidates present themselves, of whom we know that they cannot be true to their own church and its head, without being untrue to the pledged Protestantism of our sovereign; and that consequently such persons if sincere in their religion, as it pledges them against heretics, especially heretical sovereigns, must be insincere in their allegiance to the crown of England as now limited: and on the contrary, if they be indeed sincere in that allegiance—notwithstanding the contracted, pledged, and indefeasible Protestantism of our sovereign—that then they must be insincere in their Romanism or Papalism; when such candidates present themselves, how can we delegate power to them? How can we, as christian people, thankful to God for his mercies of peace and good government to our land, vote for such persons in the fear of God?

Thus, then, without requiring specific promises in detail from candidates, and indeed objecting on principle to the system of pledged delegates instead of free representatives; we are nevertheless called in our measure to the defence and support of our constitution on the general reputation of men and measures.

Under such circumstances, is it not plainly impracticable to separate our political acts from our religious principles and motives; our duty towards our fellow-men from our duty towards God? Where is the anatomist in theology, or in the metaphysics of public and private morality, who can trace the line of separation between the religious principle which secures "just weights and measures" in the shop; and the absence of it, which utterly dissociates religion and politics at the hustings? If it be alleged that religion has nothing to do with "just weights and measures," then, upon the principle which separates morality from religion, I quite agree that it is consistent to separate politics from religion. This is to make religion an exotic indeed, so delicate as —it is to be feared—to be at the withering point unto death. The man, or the nation, who puts away a good conscience towards God in his outward duties, of whatsoever kind, will, with awful certainty, make shipwreck concerning faith. If religion be not welcomed and entertained as the practical guide of life, both public and private; she will refuse to remain among men as a visitor, or a vision, to be made a

convenience of, for hypocrisy or deceit. If the revealed will of God be discarded by rulers, as no longer practicable because of the varieties of conflicting opinions among men; what have a set of servants to expect, who while endeavouring to please one another for present ease, are all combined in a course displeasing to their master? I do not mean to say that every interference with the British constitution, as it now is, must be offensive to God. I advance no such untenable position. No arrangement of human sagacity, however wisely constructed, can with safety be pronounced perfect. The distribution of power between the various estates of the realm, which has wrought so well, and under which the country has so wonderfully prospered; may possibly have been improved by those recent changes which have very decidedly turned the balance in favour of popular influence, and I will not take upon me to say, that—all things considered—still further changes in the same direction might not be made, leading to still greater improvement: but the experience of the world, as well as the sound philosophy of government grounded on what man is, pronounces against the destruction of the balance, on either side, and gives warning—which only infatuation can despise—that to destroy it on one side, is to provoke the recoil which is sure to destroy it on the other. Authority of some kind there must be for civilization, and if the people would avoid a military despotism in the end, they should manifest the increase of wis-

dom which it is said they have attained, by avoiding impatient insubordination in the beginning. On all such questions the true Christian will manifest moderation. Anxious for improvement and open to conviction, he will nevertheless, as a general rule, bear in mind the warning of divine wisdom against them who are "*given to change.*"

It is when the law of God is set at nought by the civil rulers of a state, that the christian church, in that state, should bear her faithful testimony against the transgression; addressing herself to every ruler of every degree and grade of influence, from the sovereign on the throne to the poorest freeholder, whose name is, or ought to be, on the registration lists; and reminding them all of the revealed will of the King of kings and Ruler of princes—which may indeed be neglected and despised for the present, but certainly not with permanent impunity—that "all who rule over men should *rule in the fear of God.*"

It is the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth. He it is who sitteth upon the flood, controlling the waves of the sea and the tumults of the people. He it is who setteth up kings and removeth kings; who teaches senators wisdom, or pours contempt and folly upon human councils; who maintains the peace of empires, or

withdrawing his hand of restraint, permits the proud and noisy waves of revolutionary tumult to rise and swell, and burst with overwhelming fury over the bulwarks of constituted authority. He it is, who in inscrutable wisdom, employs free agents of high intelligence as the sure accomplishers of his purposes, albeit they think not so, neither does it come into their heads to serve or obey him. In vain they combine and consult to establish their own purpose, unless it be a part of his purpose also; the consultations of their highest wisdom are baffled, and the efforts of their utmost strength are crossed and reversed, by the smallest, the most unthought of, and, as men speak, accidental or untoward circumstance. "Behold," exclaims the prophet, "is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" *

But when His own work is to be accomplished and His time is come, then, however weak and inadequate, or even foolish, the instrument whom He employs may be, opposition vanishes, and success is sure; for "the Lord sitteth king for ever."

"Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength: give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name." † You are his, for life, and breath, and all things; among the rest, for your station and influence in the nation, and, by means of the nation, in the world. You are his, for the

* Hab. ii. 13. † Psalm xxix.

use you make of your influence in disseminating or withholding his truth; as well as for the use you make of your own moral and intellectual powers in examining or neglecting that truth. Join not in the vain attempt practically to banish him out of his own world, and to deceive yourselves and others by those vague unmeaning phrases, and heathenish impersonalities, so common among statesmen and philosophers, who, nevertheless, "profess and call themselves Christians"—nature—the laws of nature —the general laws of Providence!

What, and whence are those laws? Laws are the enactments of some living being or beings; and as for their enactment, so also for their administration, they require in every instance and at every step the actings of living beings. No laws can administer themselves. If the legislative enactment be not followed up by the personal living administration, the law is a dead letter. You talk of the laws of nature; but what is nature? Is nature a God, or an angel sent from God? or a "living being" at all? If not, how can nature *act?* How can nature make or administer laws? If it be meant that the Lord God almighty, in the administration of the affairs of this world—and, as far as we know, of all worlds—*acts* upon a uniform plan, (miracles being the exceptions,) here we have an intelligible and scriptural truth. The christian definition of the laws of nature is this; the uninterrupted and omnipresent *personal agency* of the living God in Christ Jesus, by whom all

things were made, and in whom all things consist, or stand together, τὰ παντα ἐν αὐτω συνεστεκε. Col. i. 15—18.

For, to go deeper still; no creature has, or can have, independent indefeasible existence. As the personal agency of Jehovah was necessary to *create*, so it is to *sustain*. If he ceased personally to sustain the whole creation; universal annihilation would be the instantaneous and inevitable consequence. Neither is this confined to inanimate things. Mind is as truly his, as matter. He rules as completely, and as personally, over the thoughts, over the powers of thought, in every intelligent being; as he does over the processes of germination or gravitation. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west; God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another." He prolongs, or puts an end to, governments; using statesmen as his instruments, for the accomplishment of his purposes in the world, and their own glory or shame, as the case may be. "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a *nation*, or against a man only?" * The

* Dan. iv. 32, 35; Ps. lxxv. 6, 7; Job xxxiv. 29.

king of Assyria was the rod of Jehovah's anger. It did not indeed enter into his mind that he was fulfilling God's purposes. In the pride of his own ambition, his design was "to destroy and to cut off nations not a few." Arguing upon supposed general laws, without any real practical reference to almighty God; and calculating, from former victories, upon the continued successes of his numerous armies, he said, "Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus?" —Are not my conquests as entirely mine, as my own original territory? Is not Calcutta as London? —"As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem; shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man; and my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped." He had been successful far and wide, making fresh conquests in divers countries, scattering the inhabitants like frightened birds, and seizing upon their property, or, as he truly expressed it, robbing their treasures, as eggs

are gathered out of a deserted nest; and all this he ascribed to his own wisdom, and prudence, and power.

The answer of the Lord of hosts to the king of Assyria is worthy of your best attention. "Shall the axe boast itself against HIM *that heweth* therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against HIM *that shaketh* it?" . . . "Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps. *Therefore* their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded." And "it shall come to pass, that when I have performed my whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." *

"God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north. By the breath of God—mark the personality of the sacred word—*by the breath of God* frost is given; and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering HE wearieth the

* Isa. x. and xxxvii.

thick cloud; He scattereth his bright cloud. And it is turned round about by His *counsels*; that they may do whatsoever He *commandeth* them upon the face of the world in the earth. He *causeth* it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. Hearken unto this, O Job:"—and ye also, ye rulers of England, rich in her conquests and proud of her successes—" stand still and consider the wondrous works of God." *

Realize all this; and let the revealed will of God be your guide—neither be afraid or ashamed to avow that it is so—in the nationalities of parliament and the cabinet, as truly as in the integrities of commercial, or the amenities of domestic life. If, in applying the revealed will of God to national questions, you and others differ in opinion; what then? You differ as it is, having no fixed standard for any one principle of honour, or consistency, or truth. A real reference to the word of God, honestly made on both sides, would narrow your grounds of difference into a question of interpretation only, the standard being one; and whatever differences might arise there, they could scarcely be so " utterly diverse," as those which now exist in the absence of a standard altogether. Or if they were; and were found equally perplexing among men; still, they would not be so dishonouring to God, as the present system of deliberate neglect, avowed in the determination to raise no religious

* Job xxxvii. 5—4.

questions — to legislate, on professedly political grounds, in defiance of the very letter of God's law; and to stifle all reference to His authority by proclaiming your own incompetency to discuss religious differences.

He has raised you up, and caused you to bear rule over his people in this land. Know ye, and cause the people to know, whose ministers ye are: educate the people in these sublime truths of Holy Scripture, not by any questionable instrumentality of your own, constructed in the vain hope of pleasing all parties; but by means of a divinely-appointed instrumentality ready at your hand; by making the church, whose office it is to bear witness for God, commensurate with the wants of the people. Honour God's witness in the nation, by an increase of its resources and its efficiency, corresponding to the increase of every other department of our polity. By so doing, you will confer the greatest attainable benefits on the nation; directly on those who will receive the teaching of the national church; and indirectly on all the rest, by the prolonged peace, and good order, and prosperity of the whole realm.

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